



*Antiquary's Magazine. 1838*  
DEVOTIONAL  
TRACTS

Concerning the  
Presence of GOD,

AND OTHER  
RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS.

In the LETTERS and CONVERSATIONS  
of Brother *Laurence*, &c.

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Translated from the FRENCH.

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The SECOND EDITION, Corrected.

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THE  
P R E F A C E.

**I**T is natural to recommend what we are fond of: It seems an Addition to our own Happiness, if we can gain others to partake of it, and share with us in the Treasures, which we fancy we have discovered.

I think this is the Motive of Publishing the following *Translations*, whereof the *Originals* were wrote indeed by Persons not of our Communion: But when there was a Famine in *Samaria*, the Lepers, (as they rightly

argued among themselves, 2 *Kings* vii. 9.) *had done Ill, if they had not published the Plenty they had found in the Camp of the Syrians.*

It is certainly very advantageous to have Religion placed in various Lights, as it has been felt and practised and taught by Men of various Characters. There are more than enough *Learned Books* upon the Subject. Here are some of another Kind, wrote by Illiterate Persons, whose Knowledge was founded only in their own Experience: and yet (if, as our great *Sanderfon* has determined, *a good Conscience be the best Divinity*) they were very able Divines.

It is a just Complaint of many Books, that they are Copies one after the other, which grow fainter and falser, the farther they are removed from the Original. An Author makes a Book, to Teach us what he has  
learned

learned from other Books, which Books are perhaps distant by many Descents from that, in which he had expressed himself, who produced the Materials from his own Fund and Experience. This is the Reason why the most Judicious in every Science are so fond of Originals, and what comes immediately from the Source, although perhaps rude and unfinished. What we here present to the Reader, is truly of this Character ; it wants indeed the Polish and Varnish of Art, but Nature and Truth make abundant Recompence.

The two first Pieces in this Collection were written by one *Nicholas Herman*, of *Lorraine*, a mean and unlearned Man ; who, after having been a Soldier, and Footman, was admitted a Lay-Brother among the barefooted *Carmelites* at *Paris* ; where (as is customary when Persons go into a religious Order) his Name was changed, and he was called *Brother Laurence*.



His Conversion began (when he was about eighteen Years of Age) with an high Notion he conceived of the Power, and Wisdom of God; which Notion was cherished and improved continually by his driving away all vain Thoughts that might interrupt or weaken it. It may seem strange, that so affecting a Sense of the Divine Attributes should have been occasioned (as they were) by seeing a Tree dry and leafless in the Winter Season, and reflecting [what a Change God would make in it by the Productions of the Spring. This, I say, may perhaps seem strange; but the Wonder really lies on the other hand, that all the World are not affected as he was, and that the daily Miracles of Nature make so little Impression on us.

Since that Time he grew in the Knowledge and Love of God, endeavouring

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vouring to walk *in his Presence*, and direct all his Actions to his Glory. And he lived long in the Practice of these Principles; for he was Fourſcore when he died. After his Death, one of his Letters being ſeen by ſome Perſons of Piety, occaſioned their collecting all of his they could find, which are here Tranſlated. The *Converſations* are ſuppoſed to have been written by M. *Beaufort*, Grand Vicar to M. *de Chalons*, now Cardinal *de Noailles*, with whoſe Recommendation they were published.

The next Tranſlation, is of a Letter wrote by a Woman (a Proteſtant of *Amſterdam*) to one of her own Sex, who was ſomewhat troubled in Mind. Many Perſons have been affected and edified by it, as it was published in *French*; and it is hoped the *Engliſh* will have the ſame Succeſs.

There are added to these, some *Letters* and *Meditations* by the late Archbishop of *Cambray*, whose Name is a sufficient Recommendation.

And the last Piece is, *The Advice of a Mother to her Daughter, concerning Religion*. We are assured that this Title is a true Account of it, and that it was really written by a Lady of Quality, upon the Occasion here alledged.

As the principal Doctrine inculcated in these Treatises, especially the first and the last, is *an habitual Sense of God present with us*; I think it necessary here to say somewhat of the Scripture-Doctrine upon that Subject.

We find there, that before the Promulgation of the Law and Gospel, this, with an obscure Expectation of a Redeemer, is represented as the whole Religion

Religion of the Patriarchs. For this *Enoch* \* was translated, *Noah* † preserved from the Deluge, to be the Founder of the Second World, and *Abraham* ‡ merited the peculiar Title of *Father* § of the Faithful; which last Word makes it seasonable to remark here, that what is called *Walking before God* in the Old Testament, is stiled *Faith* in the New; as may be seen particularly in the Eleventh Chapter to the *Hebrews*.

And the same habitual practical Sense of God being the unvariable Substance of Religion, is still preserved, as the End both of the Law and the Gospel. Before these, and in the Beginning of Time, the Creation of the World, while that was fresh and new, could not but affect Men with great and powerful Notions of the Divinity, for every thing then witnessed the recent  
Miracle.

\* Genesis v. 24. Heb. xi. 5. † Gen. vi. 9.  
‡ Gen. xvii. 11. § Rom. iv. 11, 12. Gal. iii. 7.



Miracle. *Adam* lived above Nine Hundred Years, and so long the World saw that very Man, whom the Lord formed out of the Dust of the Ground ; they all owned him for their common Parent, and often heard him tell the Story of his Creation. They saw that He himself had no Father, but came immediately out of the Hands of God. This was such a sensible Demonstration of the Divinity, as could not but make a great Impression on them. But long Tradition by degrees weakened it, as the World grew older and more depraved : and while the great Machine moved regularly, thoughtless Men forgot the Hand which first set it in Motion.

And therefore God was pleased to make fresh Revelations of himself ; as first in the Promulgation of the Law, when the Miracles of *Egypt*, the *Red-Sea*, and the *Wilderness*, with the Prodigious of *Mount Sinai*, served to renew the  
the

the Knowledge of God in the Minds of his People with fresh Vigour and Efficacy: and the Legal Ceremonies were so contrived, as might most conduce to maintain it. For I conceive that the principal Design of Instituting, under the *Jewish* Dispensation, so many Rites, which concerned not only their outward Behaviour at the solemn Times of Religious Worship, but extended to their Diet, their Dress, their Dwelling, and the ordinary Functions of Life, was to remind them continually upon all Occasions, of G O D, who instituted them; and to admonish them incessantly to behave themselves as *in his Presence*, while the peculiar Method of all their Actions was regulated by his Direction. And when these Rites failed of that End, and the People observed them by Rote, and for Form-sake only, without any regard to Him, who appointed them; then they became unacceptable to God, and were at length abrogated.

Then

Then *Emmanuel* (G O D W I T H U S) was Born among us ; and it was revealed that He was *the true Light, which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*: And that he actually *dwells* \* in all his Servants, who are therefore stiled his *House*, his *Temple*, his *Members*, and *Partakers of his Divine Nature*. Which Expressions are surprising Assurances of God's *Presence with us*, and lay such Obligations upon us to walk in it, as cannot be neglected without Peril of Salvation.

\* 1 John iii, 24.





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E R R A T A.

- PAGE 4, Line 8, *for* rretrievable, *read*, irretreivable.  
Page 23, Line 12, *dele* this.  
Page 26, Line 1, *for* adence, *read*, fidence.  
—— Line 2, *for* nother, *read*, another.  
Page 83, Line 15, *for* natural, *read*, unnatural.  
Page 158, Line 5, *after* loving, *add*, Him.  
Page 185, Line 2, *for* and, *read*, *for*.  
Page 187, Line 18, *for* and, *read*, but.  
Page 188, Line 21, *for* and, *read* that.



OF THE  
P R E S E N C E  
O F  
G O D.



*The First LETTER.*



Have taken this Opportunity to communicate to you the Sentiments of one of our Society concerning the admirable Effects and continual Assistances which he receives from *the Presence of God*. Let you and I both profit by them.

You must know, his continual Care has been, for above forty Years past that he has spent in Religion, to be *always with God*; and to do nothing, say nothing, and think nothing, which may displease him;

B

and



and this without any other View, than purely for the Love of him, and because he deserves infinitely more.

He is now so accustomed to that *Divine Presence*, that he receives from it continual Succours upon all Occasions. For about thirty Years his Soul has been filled with Joys so continual, and sometimes so great, that he is forced to use Means to moderate them, and to hinder their appearing outwardly.

If sometimes he is a little too much absent from that *Divine Presence*, God presently makes himself to be felt in his Soul to recal him; which often happens when he is most engag'd in his outward Business: He answers with exact Fidelity to these inward Drawings, either by an Elevation of his Heart towards God, or by a meek and fond Regard to him, or by such Words as Love forms upon these Occasions; as for Instance, *My God, here I am, all devoted to Thee: Lord make me according to thy Heart.* And then it seems to him (as in Effect he feels it) that this God of Love, satisfied with such few Words, reposes again, and rests in the Fund and Center of his

his Soul. The Experience of these things gives him such an Assurance that God is always in the Fund or Bottom of his Soul, as renders him incapable of doubting it upon any Account whatever.

Judge by this what Content and Satisfaction he enjoys, while he continually finds in himself so great a Treasure: He is no longer in an anxious Search after it, but has it open before him, and may take what he pleases of it.

He complains much of our Blindness; and cries often, that we are to be pitied, who content ourselves with so little. *God, saith he, has infinite Treasures to bestow, and we take up with a little sensible Devotion, which passes in a Moment. Blind as we are, we hinder God, and stop the Current of his Graces. But when he finds a Soul penetrated with a lively Faith, he pours into it his Graces and Favours plentifully: There they flow like a Torrent, which, after being forcibly stopp'd against its ordinary Course, when it has found a Passage, spreads itself with Impetuosity and Abundance.*

Yes, we often stop this Torrent, by the little Value we set upon it. But let us

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stop it no more: Let us enter into ourselves, and break down the Bank which hinders it. Let us make way for Grace; let us redeem the lost Time, for perhaps we have but little left: Death follows us close, let us be well prepared for it; for we die but once, and a Miscarriage *there* is irretrievable.

I say again, let us enter into ourselves. The Time presses: There is no Room for Delay: Our Souls are at Stake. I believe you have taken such effectual Measures, that you will not be surprized. I commend you for it, it is the one thing necessary: We must nevertheless always work at it, because not to advance in the spiritual Life is to go back. But those who have the Gale of the holy Spirit, go forward even in Sleep. If the Vessel of our Soul is still tossed with Winds and Storms, let us awake the Lord, who reposes in it, he will quickly calm the Sea.

I have taken the Liberty to impart to you these good Sentiments, that you may compare them with your own: They will serve again to kindle and inflame them, if by Misfortune (which God forbid, for it would

*Of the Presence of God.* 5

would be indeed a great Misfortune) they should be, tho' never so little, cool'd. Let us then *both* recal our first Fervours. Let us profit by the Example and the Sentiments of this Brother, who is little known of the World, but known of God, and extremely carefs'd by him. I will pray for you, do you pray instantly for me, who am in our Lord.

June 1682.

*Yours, &c.*

\*\*\*\*\*!\*\*\*\*\*

*Second LETTER.*

**I** Received this Day two Books and a Letter from Sister — who is preparing to make her Profession, and upon that Account desires the Prayers of your holy Society, and yours in particular. I perceive that she reckons much upon them; pray do not disappoint her. Beg of God that she may make her Sacrifice in the View of his Love alone, and with a firm Resolution to be wholly devoted to him. I will send you one of those Books which treat of the *Presence of God*; a Subject, which, in



6            *Of the Presence of God.*

my Opinion, contains the whole spiritual Life: And it seems to me, that whoever duly practises it, will soon become spiritual.

I know that for the right Practice of it, the Heart must be empty of all other things; because God will possess the Heart *alone*: And as he cannot possess it *alone*, without emptying it of all besides, so neither can he act *there*, and do in it what he pleases, unless it be left vacant to him.

There is not in the World a kind of Life more sweet and delightful, than that of a continual Conversation with God: Those only can comprehend it, who practise and experience it: Yet I do not advise you to do it from that Motive; 'tis not Pleasure which we ought to seek in this Exercise; but let us do it from a Principle of Love, and because God would have us.

Were I a Preacher, I should, above all other things, preach the Practice of *the Presence of God*: And were I a Director, I should advise all the World to it: So necessary do I think it, and so easy too.

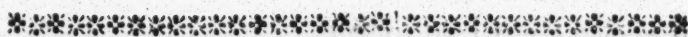
Ah! knew we but the Want we have of the Grace and Assistance of God, we should  
never



never lose Sight of him; no, not for a Moment. Believe me; make immediately an holy and firm Resolution never more wilfully to forget him, and to spend the rest of your Days in his sacred Presence, deprived for the Love of him (if he thinks fit) of all Consolations.

Set heartily about this Work, and if you do it as you ought, be assured, that you will soon find the Effects of it. I will assist you with my Prayers, poor as they are: I recommend myself earnestly to yours, and those of your holy Society, being theirs, and more particularly

*Yours, &c.*



*Third LETTER.*

To the same.

**I** Have received from Mrs. — the Things which you gave her for me. I wonder that you have not given me your Thoughts of the little Book I sent to you, and which you must have received. Pray

set heartily about the Practice of it in your old Age: It is better late than never.

I cannot imagine how religious Persons can live satisfied, without the Practice of *the Presence of God*. For my Part, I keep myself retired with him in the Fund or Center of my Soul as much as I can; and while I am so with him, I fear nothing: But the least turning from him is insupportable.

This Exercise does not much fatigue the Body: It is, however, proper to deprive it sometimes, nay often, of many little Pleasures, which are innocent and lawful: For God will not permit that a Soul, which desires to be devoted intirely to him, should take other Pleasures than with him: That is more than reasonable.

I do not say that therefore we must put any violent Constraint upon ourselves. No, we must serve God in an holy Freedom, we must do our Business faithfully, without Trouble or Disquiet; recalling our Mind to God mildly and with Tranquillity, as often as we find it wandering from him.

It is however necessary to put our whole Trust in God, laying aside all other Cares,  
and

and even some particular Forms of Devotion, tho' very good in themselves, yet such as one often engages in unreasonably; because those Devotions are only Means to attain the End: So when by this Exercise of *the Presence of God* we are *with him*, who is our End, it is then useless to return to the Means: But we may continue with him our Commerce of Love, persevering in his holy Presence, one while by an Act of Praise, of Adoration, or of Desire; one while by an Act of Resignation, or Thanksgiving, and in all the Manners which our Spirit can invent.

Be not discourag'd by the Repugnance, which you may find in it from Nature; you must do yourself Violence. At the first, one often thinks it lost Time; but you must go on, and resolve to persevere in it to Death, notwithstanding all the Difficulties that may occur. I recommend myself to the Prayers of your holy Society, and yours in particular. I am in our Lord,

Nov. 16<sup>th</sup> 5.

*Yours, &c.*

*Fourth LETTER.*

**I** Pity you much. It will be of great Importance if you can leave the Care of your Affairs to —, and spend the Remainder of your Life only in Worshiping God. He requires no great Matters of us; a little Remembrance of him from Time to Time, a little Adoration; sometimes to pray for his Grace, sometimes to offer him your Sufferings, and sometimes to return him Thanks for the Favours he has given you, and still gives you, in the midst of your Troubles; and to console yourself with him the ofteneft you can. Lift up your Heart to him sometimes even at your Meals, and when you are in Company: The least little Remembrance will always be acceptable to him. You need not cry very loud; he is nearer to us than we are aware of.

It is not necessary for being with God, to be always at Church; we may make an Oratory of our Heart, wherein to retire from Time to Time to converse with him in Meekness, Humility, and Love. Every  
one



one is capable of such familiar Conversation with God, some more, some less: He knows what we can do. Let us begin then; perhaps he expects but one generous Resolution on our Part. Have Courage. We have but little Time to live; you are near Sixty four, and I am almost Eighty. Let us live and die with God: Sufferings will be sweet and pleasant to us, while we are with him; and the greatest Pleasures will be, without him, a cruel Punishment to us. May he be blest'd for all. *Amen.*

Use yourself then, by Degrees, thus to worship him, to beg his Grace, to offer him your Heart, from Time to Time, in the midst of your Business, even every Moment, if you can. Do not always scrupulously confine your self to certain Rules, or particular Forms of Devotion; but act with a general Confidence in God, with Love and Humility. You may assure—— of my poor Prayers, and that I am their Servant, and particularly

*Yours, in our Lord, &c.*

*Fifth LETTER.*

To the Reverend —

**N**OT finding my manner of Life in Books, altho' I have no Difficulty about it, yet for greater Security I shall be glad to know your Thoughts concerning it.

In a Conversation some Days since with a Person of Piety, he told me, the spiritual Life was a Life of Grace, which begins with servile Fear, which is encreas'd by Hope of eternal Life, and which is consummated by pure Love. That each of these States had its different Stages, by which one arrives at last at that blessed Consummation.

I have not followed all these Methods. On the contrary, from I know not what Instincts, I found they discourag'd me. This was the Reason why at my Entrance into Religion, I took a Resolution to give myself up to God, as the best Satisfaction I could make for my Sins; and for the Love of him to renounce All besides.

For

For the first Years, I commonly employ'd myself during the Time set apart for Devotion, with the Thoughts of Death, of Judgment, Hell, Heaven and my Sins. Thus I continued some Years, applying my Mind carefully the rest of the Day, and even in the midst of my Business, to *the Presence of God*, whom I consider'd always as *with* me, often as *in* me.

At length I came insensibly to do the same Thing during my set Times of Prayer, which caused in me great Delight and Consolation. This Practice produced in me so high an Esteem for God, that *Faith* alone was capable to satisfy me in that Point. [*I suppose he means*, that all distinct Notions he could form of God were unsatisfactory, because he perceiv'd them to be unworthy of God: And therefore his Mind was not to be satisfied, but by the Views of *Faith*, which apprehends God as infinite and incomprehensible, as he is in himself, and not as he can be conceiv'd by human Ideas.]

Such was my Beginning: And yet I must tell you, that for the first ten Years I suffer'd much: The Apprehension that I  
was

*Of the Presence of God.*

was not devoted to God, as I wish'd to be, my past Sins always present to my Mind, and the great unmerited Favours which God did me, were the Matter and Source of my Sufferings. During this Time, I fell often, and rose again presently. It seem'd to me, that the Creatures, Reason, and God himself, were against me; and *Faith* alone for me. I was troubled sometimes with Thoughts, that to believe I had receiv'd such Favours, was an Effect of my Presumption, which pretended to be *at once* where others arrive with Difficulty; at other Times, that it was a wilful Delusion, and that there was no Salvation for me.

When I thought of nothing but to end my Days in these Troubles (which did not at all diminish the Trust I had in God, and which serv'd only to encrease my Faith) I found myself chang'd all at once; and my Soul, which, till that Time, was in Trouble, felt a profound inward Peace, as if she were in her Center and Place of Rest.

Ever since that Time I work before God simply, in Faith, with Humility, and with Love: And I apply myself diligently to  
do



do nothing, say nothing, and think nothing, which may displease him. I hope, that when I have done what I can, he will — do with me what he pleases.

As for what passes in me at present, I cannot express it. I have no Pain or Difficulty about my State, because I have no Will but that of God, which I endeavour to accomplish in all things, and to which I am so resign'd, that I would not take up a Straw from the Ground against his Order, or from any other Motive, but purely that of Love to him.

I have quitted all Forms of Devotion and set Prayers, but those to which my State obliges me. And I make it my Business only to persevere in his holy Presence, wherein I keep myself by a simple Attention, and a general fond Regard to God, which I may call, an *actual Presence of God*; or to speak better, an habitual, silent, and secret Conversation of the Soul with God, which often causes in me Joys and Raptures inwardly, and sometimes also outwardly, so great, that I am forced to use Means to moderate them, and prevent their Appearance to others.

In short, I am assured beyond all Doubt, that my Soul has been with God above these thirty Years. I pass over many things, that I may not be tedious to you : Yet I think it proper to inform you, after what Manner I consider myself before God, whom I behold as my *King*.

I consider myself as the most wretched of Men, full of Sores and Corruption, and who has committed all sorts of Crimes against his King: Touch'd with a sensible Regret, I confess to him all my Wickedness, I ask his Forgiveness, I abandon myself in his Hands, that he may do what he pleases with me. This King, full of Mercy and Goodness, very far from chastising me, embraces me with Love, makes me eat at his Table, serves me with his own Hands, gives me the Key of his Treasures; he converses and delights himself with me incessantly in a thousand and a thousand Ways, and treats me, in all Respects, as his Favourite. It is thus I consider myself from Time to Time in his holy Presence.

My most usual Method is this simple Attention, and such a general passionate Regard to God; to whom I find myself  
often

often attach'd with greater Sweetness and Delight, than that of an Infant at the Mother's Breast: So that, if I dare use the Expression, I should choose to call this State the Bosom of God, for the inexpressible Sweetness which I taste and experience there.

If some times my Thoughts wander from it by Necessity, or Infirmary, I am presently recall'd by inward Motions, so charming and delicious, that I am ashamed to mention them. I desire your Reverence to reflect rather upon my great Wretchedness, of which you are fully inform'd, than upon the great Favours which God does me, all unworthy and ungrateful as I am.

As for my set Hours of Prayer, they are only a Continuation of the same Exercise; sometimes I consider myself there as Stone before a Carver, whereof he is to make a Statue: Presenting myself thus before God, I desire him to make his perfect Image in my Soul, and render me intirely like himself.

At other Times, when I apply myself to Prayer, I feel all my Spirit, and all my Soul, lift itself up without any Care or Effort of mine: And it continues as it were suspended,

suspended, and firmly fixt in God, as in its Center and Place of Rest.

I know that some charge this State with Inactivity, Delusion, and Self-love: I confess that it is an holy Inactivity, and would be a happy Self-love, if the Soul, in that State, were capable of it; because in Effect, while she is in this Repose, she cannot be disturb'd by such Acts, as she was formerly accustom'd to, and which were then her Support, but would now rather hinder than assist her.

Yet I cannot bear that this should be called Delusion; because the Soul, which thus enjoys God, desires herein nothing but him. If this be Delusion in me, it belongs to God to remedy it. Let him do what he pleases with me: I desire only him, and to be wholly devoted to him. You will however oblige me in sending me your Opinion, to which I always pay a great Deference, for I have a singular Esteem for your Reverence, and am in our Lord,

*Yours, &c.*





## Sixth LETTER.

WE have a God, who is infinitely gracious, and knows all our Wants. I always thought that he would reduce you to Extremity. He will come in his own Time, and when you least expect it. Hope in him more than ever: 'Thank him, with me, for the Favours he does you, particularly for the Fortitude and Patience which he gives you in your Afflictions: 'Tis a plain Mark of the Care he takes of you; comfort yourself then with him, and give Thanks for all.

I admire also the Fortitude and Bravery of Mr. — God has given him a good Disposition, and a good Will; but there is in him still a little of the World, and a great deal of Youth. I hope the Affliction which God has sent him, will prove a wholesome Remedy to him, and make him enter into himself: 'Tis an Accident very proper to engage him to put all his Trust in *him*, who accompanies him every where: Let him think of him the ofteneft he can,  
 especially

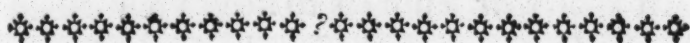
especially in the greatest Dangers. A little lifting up the Heart suffices ; a little Remembrance of God, one Act of inward Worship, tho' upon a March, and Sword in hand, are Prayers, which, however short, are nevertheless very acceptable to God, and far from lessening a Soldier's Courage in occasions of Danger ; they best serve to fortify it.

Let him then think of God the most he can ; let him accustom himself, by Degrees, to this small, but holy Exercise ; no Body perceives it, and nothing is easier than to repeat often in the Day these little internal Adorations. Recommend to him, if you please, that he think of God the most he can in the Manner here directed ; it is very fit and most necessary for a Soldier, who is daily exposed to Dangers of Life, and often of his Salvation. I hope that God will assist him and all the Family, to whom I present my Service, being theirs and

*Osob. 1688.*

*Yours, &c.*

*Seventh*



*Seventh LETTER.*

*Concerning wandering Thoughts in Prayer.*

**Y**OU tell me nothing new: You are not the only one that is troubled with wandering Thoughts. Our Mind is extremely roving, but as the Will is Mistress of all our Faculties, she must recal them, and carry them to God as their last End.

When the Mind, for want of being sufficiently reduc'd by Recollection at our first engaging in Devotion, has contracted certain bad Habits of wandering and Dissipation, they are difficult to overcome, and commonly draw us, even against our Wills, to the Things of the Earth.

I believe one Remedy for this is, to confess our Faults, and to humble ourselves before God. I do not advise you to use Multiplicity of Words in Prayer; many Words and long Discourses being often the Occasions of wandering: Hold yourself in Prayer before God like a dumb or paralytick Beggar at a rich Man's Gate :

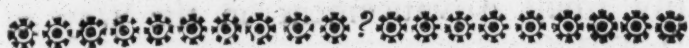
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Let it be *your* Business to keep your Mind in the Presence of the Lord: If it sometimes wander, and withdraws itself from him, do not much disquiet yourself for that; Trouble and Disquiet serve rather to distract the Mind, than to recollect it; the Will must bring it back in Tranquillity; if you persevere in this Manner, God will have Pity on you.

One Way to recollect the Mind easily in the Time of Prayer, and preserve it more in Tranquillity, is not to let it wander too far at other Times: You should keep it strictly in the Presence of God, and being accustomed to think of him often, you will find it easy to keep your Mind calm in the Time of Prayer, or at least to recal it from its Wanderings.

I have told you already at large, in my former Letters, of the Advantages we may draw from this Practice of the Presence of God: Let us set about it seriously, and pray for one another, &c.



*Eighth LETTER.*

**T**HE enclos'd is an Answer to that which I receiv'd from —, pray deliver it to her. She seems to me full of good Will, but she would go faster than Grace. One does not become holy all at once. I recommend her to you: We ought to help one another by our Advice, and yet more by our good Examples. You will oblige me to let me hear of her from Time to Time, and whether she be very fervent and very obedient.

Let us this think often that our only Business in this Life is to please God, that perhaps all besides is but Folly and Vanity. You and I have liv'd above forty Years in Religion [*i. e.* a Monastick Life]. Have we employ'd them in loving and serving God, who, by his Mercy, has call'd us to this State, and for that very End? I am filled with Shame and Confusion, when I reflect, on one Hand, upon the great Favours which God has done, and incessantly continues to do me; and on the other, upon the ill Use I have made of them, and  
my

my small Advancement in the Way of Perfection.

Since, by his Mercy, he gives us still a little Time, let us begin in earnest, let us repair the lost Time, let us return with a full Assurance to that Father of Mercies, who is always ready to receive us affectionately. Let us renounce, let us generously renounce, for the Love of him, all that is not him; he deserves infinitely more. Let us think of him perpetually. Let us put all our Trust in him: I doubt not but we shall soon find the Effects of it in receiving the Abundance of his Grace, with which we can do all things, and without which we can do nothing but sin.

We cannot escape the Dangers which abound in Life, without the actual and *continual* Help of God; let us then pray to him, for it *continually*. How can we pray to him, without being with him? How can we be with him, but in thinking of him often? And how can we often think of him, but by a holy Habit, which we should form of it? You will tell me, that I am always saying the same thing: It is true, for this is the best and easiest Method

I know

I know, and as I use no other, I advise all the World to it. We must *know* before we can *love*. In order to *know* God, we must often *think* of him; and when we come to *love* him, we shall then *also think* of him often, *for our Heart will be with our Treasure*. This is an Argument which well deserves your Consideration. I am

March 1689.

Your, &c.

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*Ninth LETTER.*

**I** Have had a good deal of Difficulty to bring myself to write to Mr. — and I do it now, purely because you and Madam — desire me. Pray write the Directions, and send it to him. I am very well pleased with the Trust which you have in God: I wish that he may encrease it in you more and more: We cannot have too much in so good and faithful a friend, who will never fail us in this World nor the next.

If Mr. — makes his Advantage of the Loss he has had, and puts all his Con-  
C fidence

adence in God, he will soon give him nother Friend, more power ful, and more inclined to serve him. He disposes of Hearts as he pleases. Perhaps Mr. ——— was too much attach'd to him he has lost. We ought to love our Friends, but without encroaching upon the Love of God, which must be the Principal.

Pray remember what I have recommended to you, which is, to think often on God, by Day, by Night, in your Business, and even in your Diversions. He is always near you, and with you, leave him not alone. You would think it rude to leave a Friend alone, who came to visit you: Why then must God be neglected? Do not then forget him, but think on him often, adore him continually, live and die with him: This is the glorious Employment of a Christian; in a Word, this is our Profession; if we do not know it, we must learn it. I will endeavour to help you with my Prayers, and am in our Lord,

Oct. 1689,

*Your, &c.**Tenth*



*Tenth LETTER.*

**I** Do not pray that you may be delivered from your Pains ; but I pray God earnestly, that he would give you Strength and Patience to bear them as long as he pleases. Comfort yourself with him, who holds you fastened to the Cross: He will loose you when he thinks fit. Happy those who suffer with him: Accustom yourself to suffer in that Manner, and seek from him the Strength to endure as much, and as long as he shall judge to be necessary for you. The Men of the World do not comprehend these Truths, nor is it to be wondered at, since they suffer like what they are, and not like Christians: They consider Sickness as a Pain to Nature, and not as a Favour from God; and seeing it only in that Light, they find nothing in it but Grief and Distress. But those, who consider Sickness as coming from the Hand of God, as the Effect of his Mercy, and the Means which he employs for their Salvation,

vation, commonly find in it great Sweetness and sensible Consolation.

I wish you could convince yourself, that God is often (in some Sense) nearer to us, and more effectually present with us, in Sickness than in Health. Rely upon no other Physician, for, according to my Apprehension, he reserves your Cure to himself. Put then all your Trust in him, and you will soon find the Effects of it in your Recovery, which we often retard, by putting greater Confidence in Physick than in God.

Whatever Remedies you make Use of, they will succeed only so far as he permits. When Pains come from God, he only can cure them. He often sends Diseases of the Body, to cure those of the Soul. Comfort yourself with the sovereign Physician both of Soul and Body.

I foresee that you will tell me, that I am very much at my Ease, that I eat and drink at the Table of the Lord. You have Reason: But think you that it would be a small Pain to the greatest Criminal in the World, to eat at the King's Table, and be serv'd by him, and notwithstanding such Favours, to  
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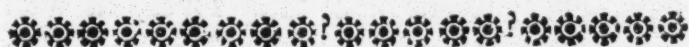
be without Assurance of Pardon? I believe he would feel exceeding great Uneasiness, and such as nothing could moderate, but only his Trust in the Goodness of his Sovereign. So I assure you, that whatever Pleasures I taste at the Table of my King, yet my Sins, ever present before my Eyes, as well as the Uncertainty of my Pardon, torment me, tho' in Truth that Torment itself is pleasing.

Be satisfied with the Condition in which God places you : However happy you may think me, I envy you. Pains and Sufferings would be a Paradise to me, while I should suffer with my God : And the greatest Pleasures would be Hell to me, if I could relish them without him ; all my Consolation would be to suffer something for his Sake.

I must, in a little Time, go to God. What comforts me in this Life is, that I now see him by *Faith*, and I see him in such a Manner as might make me say sometimes, *I believe no more, but I see*. I feel what Faith teaches us, and in that Assurance and that Practice of Faith I will live and die with him.

Continue then always with God; 'tis the only Support and Comfort for your Affliction. I shall beseech him to be with you. I present my Service, &c.

*Nov. 1690.*



*Eleventh LETTER.*

**S**INCE you desire so earnestly that I should communicate to you the Method by which I arrived at that *Habitual Sense of God's Presence*, which our Lord, of his Mercy, has been pleased to vouchsafe to me; I must tell you, that it is with great Difficulty that I am prevailed on by your Importunities; and now I do it only upon the Terms, that you shew my Letter to no Body. If I knew that you would let it be seen, all the Desire I have for your Advancement would not be able to determine me to it. The Account I can give you is this.

*This Letter has no Date, and is suppos'd to have been written the first of this Collection.*

Having found in many Books different Methods of going to God, and divers Practices



Practices of the spiritual Life, I thought this would serve rather to puzzle me, than facilitate what I sought after, which was nothing else, but how to become wholly God's. This made me resolve to give the All for the All: So after having given myself wholly to God, to make all the Satisfaction I could for my Sins, *I renounced for the Love of him, every thing that was not him; and I began to live, as if there was none but he and I in the World.* Sometimes I considered myself before him, as a poor Criminal at the Feet of his Judge: At other Times, I beheld him, in my Heart as my Father, as my God: I worshipped him the ofteneft that I could, keeping my Mind in his holy Presence, and recalling it as often as I found it wandered from him. I found no small Pain in this Exercise, and yet I continued it, notwithstanding all the Difficulties that occurred, without troubling or disquieting myself, when my Mind had wandered involuntarily. I made this my Business as much all the Day long, as at the appointed Times of Prayer; for at all Times, every Hour, every Minute, even in the Height of my Business, I drove away

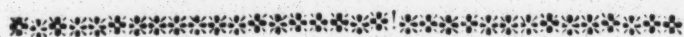
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from my Mind every Thing that was capable of interrupting my Thought of God.

Such has been my common Practice, ever since I enter'd into Religion: And tho' I have done it very imperfectly, yet I have found great Advantages by it. These, I well know, are to be imputed to the mere Mercy and Goodness of God, because we can do nothing without him; and I still less than any. But when we are faithful to keep ourselves in his holy Presence, and set him always before us: This not only hinders our offending him, and doing any thing that may displease him, at least wilfully; but it also begets in us an holy Freedom, and if I may so speak, a Familiarity with God, wherewith we ask, and that successfully, the Graces we stand in need of. In fine, by often repeating these Acts, they become *habitual*, and the Presence of God is rendered as it were *natural* to us. Give him Thanks, if you please, with me, for his great Goodness towards me, which I can never sufficiently admire, for the many Favours he has done to so miserable a Sinner as I am. May all things praise him. *Amen. I am in our Lord,*

*Yours, &c.*



## Twelfth LETTER.

**I**F we were well accustomed to the Exercise of *the Presence of God*, all bodily Diseases would be much alleviated thereby. God often permits, that we should suffer a little to purify our Souls, and oblige us to continue *with him*.

Take Courage, offer him your Pains incessantly, pray to him for Strength to endure them. Above all, get a Habit of entertaining yourself often with God, and forget him the least you can. Adore him in your Infirmities, offer yourself to him from Time to Time; and in the Height of your Sufferings, beseech him humbly and affectionately (as a Child his Father) to make you conformable to his holy Will. I shall endeavour to assist you with my poor Prayers.

God has many Ways of drawing us to himself. He sometimes hides himself from us: But *Faith* alone, which will not fail us in Time of Need, ought to be our Support, and the Foundation of our Confidence, which must be all in God.

I know not how God will dispose of me; I am always happy : All the World suffer; and I, who deserve the severest Discipline, I feel Joys so continual, and so great, that I can scarce contain them.

I would willingly ask of God a Part of your Sufferings, but that I know my Weakness, which is so great, that if he left me one Moment to myself, I should be the most wretched Man alive. And yet I know not how he can leave me alone, because Faith gives me as strong a Conviction as Sense can do, and he never forsakes us, till we have first forsaken him. Let us fear to leave him. Let us be always with him. Let us live and die in his Presence. Do you pray for me, as I for you. I am,

Nov. 1690

*Yours, &c.*



*Thirteenth LETTER.*

To the same.

**I** Am in Pain to see you suffer so long, what gives me some Ease, and sweetens the Feeling I have of your Grievs is, that



that they are Proofs of God's Love towards you: See them in that View, and you will bear them more easily. As your Case is, 'tis my Opinion that you should leave off human Remedies, and resign yourself entirely to the Providence of God; perhaps he stays only for that Resignation, and a perfect Trust in him, to cure you. Since notwithstanding all your Cares, Physick has hitherto prov'd unsuccessful, and your Malady still increases, it will not be tempting God, to abandon yourself in his Hands, and expect all from him.

I told you in my last, that he sometimes permits bodily Diseases to cure the Distempers of our Souls. Have Courage then: Make a Virtue of Necessity: Ask of God, not Deliverance from your Pains, but Strength to bear resolutely, for the Love of him, all that he should please, and as long as he shall please.

Such Prayers indeed are a little hard to Nature, but most acceptable to God, and sweet to those that love him. Love sweetens Pain, and when one loves God, one suffers for his Sake with Joy and Courage. Do you so, I beseech you: Comfort yourself  
with

with him, who is the only Physician of all our Maladies. He is the Father of the Afflicted, always ready to help us. He loves us infinitely more than we imagine: Love him then, and seek not Consolation elsewhere: I hope you will soon receive it. Adieu. I will help you with my Prayers, poor as they are, and shall be always in our Lord,

*Yours, &c.*



*Fourteenth LETTER.*

To the same.

**I** Render Thanks to our Lord, for having reliev'd you a little, according to your Desire. I have been often near expiring, tho' I was never so much satisfied as then. Accordingly I did not pray for any Relief, but I pray'd for Strength to suffer with Courage, Humility, and Love. Ah, how sweet is it to suffer with God! however great the Sufferings may be, receive them with Love. 'Tis Paradise to suffer, and be with him: So that if in this Life we would enjoy  
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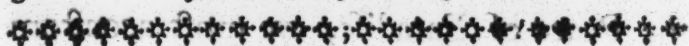
the Peace of Paradise, we must accustom ourselves to a familiar, humble, affectionate Conversation with him : We must hinder our Spirits wandering from him upon any Occasion : We must make our Heart a spiritual Temple, wherein to adore him incessantly : We must watch continually over ourselves, that we may not do, nor say, nor think any Thing that may displease him. When our Minds are thus employ'd about God, Suffering will become full of Unction and Consolation.

I know that to arrive at this State, the Beginning is very difficult ; for we must act purely in Faith. But tho' it is difficult, we know also that we can do all things with the Grace of God, which he never refuses to them who ask it earnestly. Knock, persevere in knocking, and I answer for it, that he will open to you in his due Time ; and grant you all at once, what he has deferred during many Years, Adieu. Pray to him for me, as I pray to him for you. I hope to see him quickly. I am,

*Jan. 1691.*

*Yours, &c.*

*Fifteenth*



## Fifteenth LETTER.

To the same.

**G**OD knoweth best what is needful for us, and all that he does is for our Good. If we knew how much he loves us, we should be always ready to receive equally, and with Indifference, from his Hand, the sweet and the bitter ; all would please that came from him. The sorest Afflictions never appear intolerable, but when we see them in a wrong Light : When we see them in the Hand of God, who dispenses them ; when we know that it is our loving Father, who abases and distresses us, our Sufferings will lose their Bitterness, and become even Matter of Consolation.

Let all our Employment be, to *know God* : The more one *knows* him, the more one desires to *know* him. And as *Knowledge* is commonly the Measure of *Love*, the deeper and more extensive our *Knowledge* shall be, the greater will be our *Love* : And if our *Love* of God were great, we should love him equally in Pains and Pleasures.

Let



Let us not amuse ourselves, to seek or to love God for any sensible Favours (how elevated soever) which he has, or may do us. Such Favours, tho' never so great, cannot bring us so near to God, as Faith does in one simple Act. Let us seek him often by Faith : He is within us, (seek him not elsewhere.) Are we not rude, and deserve Blame, if we leave him alone, to busy ourselves about Trifles, which do not please him, and perhaps offend him? 'Tis to be feared these Trifles will one day cost us dear.

Let us begin to be devoted to him in good earnest. Let us cast every Thing besides out of our Hearts: He would possess them alone. Beg this Favour of him. If we do what we can on our Parts, we shall soon see that Change wrought in us which we aspire after. I cannot thank him sufficiently for the Relaxation he has vouchsafed you. I hope from his Mercy the favour to see him within \* a few Days. Let us pray for one another. I am in our Lord,

*Feb. 6. 1691.*

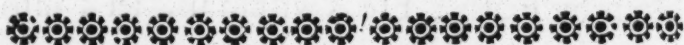
*Yours, &c.*

\* *He took his Bed two Days after and died within the Week.*

*The End of the LETTERS.*



## *Conversations with B. Laurence.*



### *First Conversation.*



THE first time I saw B. *Laurence*, was upon the third of *August*, 1666. He told me that God had done him a singular Favour in his Conversion at the Age of Eighteen.

That in the Winter, seeing a Tree stripped of its Leaves, and considering that within a little Time the Leaves would be renewed, and after that, the Flowers and Fruit appear ; he received an high View of the Providence and Power of God, which has never since been effaced from his Soul, That this View had perfectly set him loose from the World, and kindled in him such a Love for God, that he could not tell whether it had encreased in above forty Years that he had lived since.

That

That he had been Footman to Mr. *Fienbert* the Treasurer, and that he was a great awkward Fellow, who broke every Thing.

That he had desired to be received into a Monastery, thinking that his Bones would be there broke for his Awkwardness, and the Faults he should commit, and so he should sacrifice to God his Life, with its Pleasures : But that God had disappointed him, he having met with nothing but Satisfaction in that State.

That we should establish ourselves in a Sense of God's Presence, by continually conversing with him. That it was a shameful Thing to quit his Conversation, to think of Trifles and Fooleries.

That we should feed and nourish our Souls with high Notions of God, which would yield us great Joy in being devoted to him.

That we ought to *quicken*, i. e. *to enliven*, our Faith : That it was lamentable we had so little : And that instead of taking *Faith* for the Rule of their Conduct, Men amused themselves with trivial Devotions, which changed daily. That the Way of Faith

was

42      *Of the Presence of God.*

was the Spirit of the Church, and that it was sufficient to bring us to a high Degree of Perfection.

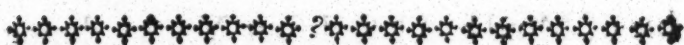
That we ought to give ourselves up to God, with Regard both to Things temporal and spiritual, and seek our Satisfaction only in the fulfilling his Will, whether he lead us by Suffering or Consolation, for all would be equal to a Soul truly resign'd. That there needed Fidelity in those Drifts, or Insensibilities and Irksomenesses in Prayer, by which God tries our Love to him: That *then* was the Time for us to make good and effectual Acts of Resignation, whereof one alone would oftentimes very much promote our spiritual Advancement.

That as for the Miseries and Sins he heard of daily in the World, he was so far from wondring at them, that, on the contrary, he was surprized there were not more, considering the Malice Sinners were capable of: That for his Part, he prayed for them; but knowing that God could remedy the Mischiefs they did, when he pleased, he gave himself no farther Trouble.

That to arrive at such Resignation as  
God



God required, we should watch attentively over all the Passions, which mingle as well in spiritual Things, as those of a grosser Nature; that God would give Light concerning those Passions, to those who truly desire to serve him. That if this was my Design, *viz.* sincerely to serve God, I might come to him (*B. Laurence*) as often as I pleased, without any Fear of being troublesome: But if not, that I ought no more to visit him.



*Second Conversation.*

Sept. 28. 1666,

**T**HAT he had always been governed by Love, without selfish Views; and that having resolved to make the Love of God the *End* of all his Actions, he had found Reasons to be well satisfied with his Method. That he was pleased when he could take up a Straw from the Ground for the Love of God seeking Him only, and nothing else, not even his Gifts.

That he had been long troubled in Mind  
from

from a certain Belief that he should be damn'd ; that all the Men in the World could not have perswaded him to the contrary ; but that he had thus reasoned with himself about it : *I did not engage in a Religious Life but for the Love of God, and I have endeavoured to act only for him: Whatever becomes of me, whether I be lost or saved, I will always continue to act purely for the Love of God. I shall have this good at least, that till Death I shall have done all that is in me to love him.* That this Trouble of Mind had lasted four Years ; during which Time, he had suffered much.

That since that Time, he had passed his Life in perfect Liberty and continual Joy. That he placed his Sins betwixt him and God, as it were to tell him, that he did not deserve his Favours, but that God still continued to bestow them in Abundance.

That in order to form a Habit of conversing with God continually, and referring all we do to him ; we must at first apply to him with some Diligence : But that after a little Care, we should find his Love inwardly excite us to it without any Difficulty.

That

That he expected, after the pleasant Days God had given him, he should have his Turn of Pain and Suffering, but that he was not uneasy about it, knowing very well, that as he could do nothing of himself, God would not fail to give him the Strength to bear them.

That when an Occasion of practising some Virtue offered, he addressed himself to God, saying, *Lord, I cannot do this unless thou enablest me* : And that then he received Strength more than sufficient.

That when he had failed in his Duty, he only confessed his Fault, saying to God, *I shall never do otherwise, if you leave me to myself ; 'tis you must hinder my falling, and mend what is amiss*. That after this, he gave himself no farther Uneasiness about it.

That we ought to act with God in the greatest Simplicity, speaking to him frankly, and plainly, and imploring his Assistance in our Affairs, just as they happen. That God never failed to grant it, as he had often experienced.

That he had been lately sent into *Burgundy* ; to buy the Provision of Wine for the Society ; which was a very unwelcome Task

46      *Of the Presence of God.*

Task to him, because he had no Turn for Business, and because he was lame, and could not go about the Boat, but by rolling himself over the Casks. That however he gave himself no Uneasiness about it, nor about the Purchase of the Wine. That he said to God, *It was his Business he was about*; and that he afterward found it very well performed. That he had been sent into *Auvergne* the Year before upon the same Account: That he could not tell how the Matter passed, but that it proved very well.

So likewise in his Business in the Kitchen (to which he had naturally a great Aversion), having accustomed himself to do every Thing there for the Love of God, and with Prayer upon all Occasions, for his Grace to do all his Work well, he had found every Thing easy, during fifteen Years that he had been employed there.

That he was very well pleased with the Post he was in now; but that he was as ready to quit that as the former, since he was always pleasing himself in every Condition, by doing little Things for the Love of God.

That with him the set Times of Prayer  
were



were not different from other Times. That he retired to pray according to the Directions of his Superior; but that he did not want such Retirement, nor ask for it, because his greatest Business did not divert him from God.

That as he knew his Obligation to love God, in all Things, and as he endeavoured so to do, he had no need of a Director to advise him; but that he needed much a Confessor to absolve him. That he was very sensible of his Faults, but not discouraged by them: That he confessed them to God, and did not plead against him to excuse them. When he had so done, he peaceably resumed his usual Practice of Love and Adoration.

That in his Trouble of Mind, he had consulted nobody; but knowing only by the Light of Faith, that God was present, he contented himself with directing all his Actions to him, *i. e.* doing them with a Desire to please him, let what would come of it.

That useless Thoughts spoil all; that the Mischief began there: but that we ought to reject them as soon as we perceived their Impertinence to the Matter  
in

in Hand, or our Salvation; and return to our Communion with God.

That at the Beginning, he had often pass'd his Time appointed for Prayer, in rejecting wandring Thoughts, and falling back into them. That he could never regulate his Devotion by certain Methods, as some do. That nevertheless at first he had *meditated* for some Time, but afterward that went off, in a Manner he could give no Account of.

That all bodily Mortifications, and other Exercises, are useles, but as they serve to arrive at the Union with God by Love: That he had well considered this, and found it the shortest Way, to go straight to him by a continual Exercise of Love, and doing all Things for his Sake.

That we ought to make a great Difference between the Acts of the *Understanding* and those of the *Will*; that the first were comparatively of little Value, and the others all. That our only Business was, to love and delight ourselves in God.

That all possible Kinds of Mortification, if they were void of the Love of God, could not efface a single Sin. That we ought  
without

without Anxiety to expect the Pardon of our Sins from the Blood of Jesus Christ, only endeavouring to love him with all our Hearts. That God seemed to have granted the greatest Favours to the greatest Sinners, as more signal Monuments of his Mercy.

That the greatest Pains or Pleasures of this World, were not to be compared with what he had experienced of both Kinds in his spiritual State: So that he was careful for nothing, and feared nothing, desiring but one only Thing of God, *viz.* that he might not offend him.

That he had no Scruples; for, said he, when I *fail* in my Duty, I readily acknowledge it, saying, *I am used to do so: I shall never do otherwise, if I am left to myself.* If I fail not, then I give God Thanks, acknowledging that it comes from him.

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*The Third Conversation.*

November 22, 1666.

**H**E told me, that the *Foundation of the spiritual Life* in him, had been an  
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high Notion and Esteem of God in Faith; which when he had once well conceived, he had no other Care at first, but faithfully to reject every other Thought, *that he might perform all his Actions for the Love of God.* That when sometimes he had not thought of God for a good while, he did not disquiet himself for it; but after having acknowledged his Wretchedness to God, he returned to him with so much the greater Trust in him, by how much he found himself more wretched to have forgot him.

That the Trust we put in God honours him much, and draws down great Graces.

That it was impossible, not only that God should deceive, but also that he should long let a Soul suffer which is perfectly resigned to him, and resolved to endure every Thing for his Sake.

That he had so often experienced the ready Succours of divine Grace upon all Occasions, that from the same Experience, when he had Business to do, he did not think of it beforehand; but when it was Time to do it, he found in God, as in a clear Mirror, all that was fit for him to do. That of late he had acted thus, without anticipating



ticipating Care ; but before the Experience abovementioned, he had used it in his Affairs.

When outward Business diverted him a little from the Thought of God, a fresh Remembrance coming from God invested his Soul, and so inflamed and transported him, that it was difficult for him to contain himself.

That he was more united to God in his outward Employments, than when he left them for Devotion in Retirement.

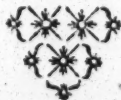
That he expected hereafter some great Pain of Body or Mind ; that the worst that could happen to him was, to lose that Sense of God which he had enjoyed so long : But that the Goodness of God assured him he would not forsake him utterly, and that he would give him Strength to bear whatever Evil he permitted to happen to him ; and therefore that he feared nothing, and had no Occasion to consult with any body about his State. That when he had attempted to do it, he had always come away more perplexed ; and that as he was conscious of his Readiness to lay down his Life for the Love of God, he had no

Apprehension of Danger. That perfect Resignation to God was the sure Way to Heaven, a Way in which we had always sufficient Light for our Conduct.

That in the Beginning of the spiritual Life, we ought to be faithful in doing our Duty and denying ourselves ; but after that, unspeakable Pleasures followed. That in Difficulties we need only have Recourse to Jesus Christ, and beg his Grace, with which every Thing became easy.

That many do not advance in the Christian Progress, because they stick in Penances, and particular Exercises, while they neglect the Love of God, which is the *End* : That this appeared plainly by their Works, and was the Reason why we see so little solid Virtue.

That there needed neither Art nor Science for going to God, but only a Heart resolutely determined to apply itself to nothing but him, or for *his* Sake, and to love him only.



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*The Fourth Conversation.*

November 25, 1667.

**H**E discoursed with me very fervently, and with great Openness of Heart, concerning his Manner of *going to God*, whereof some Part is related already.

He told me, that all consisted *in one hearty Renunciation* of every Thing which we are sensible does not lead to God; that we might accustom ourselves to a continual Conversation with him, with Freedom, and in Simplicity. That we need only to recognize God intimately present with us, to address ourselves to him every Moment, that we may beg his Assistance for knowing his Will in Things doubtful, and for rightly performing those, which we plainly see he requires of us; offering them to him before we do them, and giving him Thanks when we have done.

That in this continual Conversation with God, we are also imployed in praising, adoring, and loving him incessantly, for his infinite Goodness and Perfection.

That without being discouraged on Account of our Sins, we should pray for his Grace with a perfect Confidence, as relying upon the infinite Merits of our Lord. That God never failed offering us his Grace at each Action: That he distinctly perceived it, and never failed of it, unless when his Thoughts had wandered from a Sense of God's Presence, or he had forgot to ask his Assistance.

That God always gave us Light in our Doubts, when we had no other Design but to please him.

That our Sanctification did not depend upon changing our Works, but in doing that for God's Sake, which we commonly do for our own. That it was lamentable to see how many People mistook the Means for the End, addicting themselves to certain Works, which they performed very imperfectly, by Reason of their human or selfish Regards.

That the most excellent Method he had found of going to God, was that of doing our common Business without any View  
of



of pleasing Men \*, and (as far as we are capable) purely for the Love of God.

That it was a great Delusion, to think that the Times of Prayer ought to differ from other Times : That we were as strictly obliged to adhere to God by Action in the Time of Action, as by Prayer in its Season.

That his Prayer was nothing else but a Sense of the Presence of God, his Soul being at that Time insensible to every Thing but divine Love : And that when the appointed Times of Prayer were pass'd, he found no Difference, because he still continued with God, praising and blessing him with all his Might, so that he pass'd his Life in continual Joy ; yet hop'd that God would give him somewhat to suffer, when he should grow stronger.

That we ought once for all, heartily to put our whole Trust in God, and make a total Surrender of ourselves to him, secure that he would not deceive us.

That we ought not to be weary of doing little Things for the Love of God, who regards not the Greatness of the Work, but

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\* Gal. i. 10. Eph. vi. 5, 6.

the Love with which it is perform'd. That we should not wonder if in the Beginning we often failed in our Endeavours, but that at last we should gain an Habit, which will naturally produce its Acts in us without our Care, and to our exceeding great Delight.

That the whole Substance of Religion was Faith, Hope, and Charity; by the Practice of which, we become united to the Will of God: That all beside is indifferent, and to be used only as Means, that we may arrive at our End, and be swallowed up therein by Faith and Charity.

That all Things are possible to him who *believes*, that they are less difficult to him who *hopes*, they are more easy to him who *loves*, and still more easy to him who perseveres in the Practice of these three Virtues.

That the End we ought to propose to ourselves, is to become in this Life the most perfect Worshippers of God we can possibly be, as we hope to be through all Eternity.

That when we enter upon the spiritual Life, we should consider and examine to  
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the Bottom, what we are. And then we should find ourselves worthy of all Contempt, and such as do not deserve the Name of Christians, subject to all Kinds of Misery, and numberless Accidents, which trouble us, and cause perpetual Vicissitudes in our Health, in our Humours, in our internal and external Dispositions: In fine, Persons whom God would humble by many Pains and Labours, as well within as without. After this, we should not wonder that Troubles, Temptations, Oppositions and Contradictions, happen to us from Men. We ought, on the contrary, to submit ourselves to them, and bear them as long as God pleases, as Things highly advantageous to us.

That the greater Perfection a Soul aspires after, the more dependent it is upon Divine Grace.

\* Being question'd by one of his own Society (to whom he was obliged to open himself) by what Means he had attained such an habitual Sense of God? He told him, that since his first coming to the

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\* The following Particulars are collected from other Accounts of B. *Laurence*.

Monastry he had consider'd God as the End of all his Thoughts and Desires, as the Mark *to* which they should tend, and *in* which they should terminate.

That in the Beginning of his Noviciate, he spent the Hours appointed for private Prayer in thinking of God, so as to convince his Mind of, and to impress deeply upon his Heart the Divine Existence, rather by devout Sentiments, and Submission to the Lights of Faith, than by studied Reasonings, and elaborate Meditations. That by this short and sure Method, he exercised himself in the Knowledge and Love of God, resolving to use his utmost endeavour to live in a continual Sense of his Presence, and (if possible) never to forget him more.

That when he had thus in Prayer fill'd his Mind with great Sentiments of that Infinite Being, he went to his Work appointed in the Kitchen, (for he was Cook to the Society): There having first considered severally the Things his Office requir'd, and when and how each Thing was to be done; he spent all the Intervals

of



of his Time, as well before as after his Work, in Prayer.

That when he began his Business, he said to God with a filial Trust in him :  
“ O my God, since thou art with me, and  
“ I must now in Obedience to thy Com-  
“ mands, apply my Mind to these outward  
“ Things, I beseech thee to grant me the  
“ Grace to continue in thy Presence, and  
“ to this End, do thou prosper me with  
“ thy Assistance, receive all my Works,  
“ and possess all my Affections.”

As he proceeded in his Work, he continued his familiar Conversation with his Maker, imploring his Grace, and offering to him all his Actions.

When he had finish'd, he examin'd himself, how he had discharg'd his Duty : If he found *Well*, he return'd Thanks to God : If otherwise, he ask'd Pardon ; and without being discouraged, he set his Mind right again, and continued his Exercise of *the Presence of God*, as if he had never deviated from it. Thus, said he, by rising after my Falls, and by frequently renewed Acts of Faith and Love, I am come to a State, wherein it would be as  
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difficult for me not to think of God, as it was at first to accustom myself to it.

As B. *Laurence* had found such Advantage in walking in the Presence of God, it was natural for him to recommend it earnestly to others: But his Example was a stronger Inducement than any Arguments he could propose. His very Countenance was edifying; such a sweet and calm Devotion appearing in it, as could not but affect the Beholders. And it was observ'd, that in the greatest Hurry of Business in the Kitchen, he still preserv'd his Recollection and Heavenly-mindedness. He was never hasty nor loitering, but did each Thing in its Season, with an even uninterrupted Composure and Tranquility of Spirit. The Time of Business, said he, does not, with me, differ from the Time of Prayer; and in the Noise and Clutter of my Kitchen, while several Persons are at the same Time calling for different Things, I possess God in as great Tranquility, as if I were upon my Knees at the Sacrament.





*A LETTER concerning Regeneration,  
to one Troubled in Mind.*

**I** Have a Desire to write to you, but I know not what to say. However, I have put Pen to Paper, in Hopes that God will furnish me with such Matter as he shall think fit.

I understand, my dear Friend, that you have been somewhat troubled in Mind, upon Account of the Discovery you have made of your Wretchedness. I praise God for it: It shews that he will no longer delay the Accomplishment of his divine Work in you. To this all his Dispensations concerning you tend, and especially the great Trials which you have hitherto sustain'd by his divine Assistance.

As for me, all unworthy as I am, I have formerly often besought the Lord with many Tears, that he would grant me the Grace to make me *know myself*. His great Goodness has condescended to my earnest Request; but to say what I thereupon

thereupon discovered within myself, as I alone felt it, so I alone can rightly comprehend it: But I must say, that before this, I was very ignorant of my true Condition.

Before this, I thought I had a great Zeal for the Glory of God, and that I was sufficiently instructed in the Faith and Knowledge of Jesus Christ. But by the Direction of God, a certain Person well known to you, who had an affectionate Concern for my Soul, told me one Day, “ that I had  
“ not a true Faith in Jesus Christ as a Re-  
“ deemer, who should deliver me from my  
“ Sins.” It was at this Time that I began to be uneasy about my State, and as I did not yet know myself, it was to me a strange and unintelligible Language to hear, that *I had not yet the true Faith.* He would not then further explain himself, but only advised me that I should offer myself up entirely to Him, who alone could make me free; and that with the holy Patriarch *Jacob*, I should not cease striving with Prayers and Tears, till the Lord had heard me favourably. I thought this very good Advice: for I saw plainly, that to call upon God, must be a secure Way, and free from  
Delusion.



Delusion. So without any further Delay, I, by the Grace of God, resigned myself totally into his blessed Hands, that he might do with me what he pleased.

The good God accepting that Moment the Oblation I had made of myself, vouchsafed so to touch my Heart with his divine Love, that I became, as it were, all enflamed with its Ardors. I made a Resolution, never for the future to value any Thing but him; and that to please him should be my only Business. I would no more use any of my Faculties, but to honour and serve him. I seemed to myself perfectly ready to follow him, thro' whatever Ways he should please to lead me. I thought no Crosses too heavy for me; and my Love made me embrace them all within my Heart. I said to him fondly, "Take me in Hand, O Lord, and spare me not: here I am before thee, O take me in Hand." As for the World, I let it pass for what it is, and took no farther Thought about it: my Heart seemed to be too noble to cleave to any Thing in it. I valued my divine Lover to such a Degree, that nothing in the Earth could any more affect

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affect me. One only Thing sufficed me, and that was, to be able to follow him. No Way was too difficult for me ; no Cross too bitter ; no Troubles too many ; and, in a Word, I was ready to endure every Thing with him. I was content with all that might happen, provided only that I might find him. If all the Kingdoms of the Earth had been offered me, I would have disdained so much as to think of them. I would gladly have been stripped of all Things : my divine Lover sufficed me. I embraced him sweetly in my Heart with the Arms of Love : and he, on his Part, condescended towards me, and made me know, that he is the true Lover of Souls. It was a wonderful State which I was in at that Time : if it could have been manifested to the World, it would have appeared very extraordinary ; but the Lord would have it concealed ; for there was still within me Matter of Reprehension, though I was not sensible of it. However, I continued so happy in my Beloved, that although I should have been forced to live without other Company, a Vagabond in a Desert, I should have found no Difficulty in it. This State had not  
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lasted long, when, in effect, I found myself led into a Desert; but it was the Desert of myself, and there I lost him whom my Soul loved. This Loss was so intolerable, that being extravagant with the Vehemence of my Love, I ran about like one distracted in search of him, but without finding him; for the Spouse had withdrawn himself, according to what he himself had foretold in the Gospel, *Matt. ix. 15.* where he saith, *The Days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them; and then shall they fast:* He declares the Reason of that Absence in the next Words: *No Man putteth a Piece of new Cloth into an old Garment;* signifying thereby, that the old Man was not yet Dead. *Neither, as he adds, do Men put new Wine into old Bottles, or Vessels:* which teaches us, that the Vessels must first be purified, before they are fit to receive and keep the heavenly Wine.

But all this was concealed from me, till the Lord had given me the Knowledge of my inward State; and then it was that I found myself in a most forlorn Condition, that I knew myself altogether poor, wretched, and miserable; and that I saw my Vessel

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fel to be filled with Uncleannefs and Iniquity. O what a Surprize and Anxiety was I in, when I came to discover, that hitherto I had not *known Jesus Chrift, but according to the Flefh only*; and that I had not poffeffed him but with Propriety, *i. e.* Selfifhnefs; for which Reason, it was neceffary that he fhould withdraw himfelf. But alas! this was what I then knew not; and therefore the Lofs of him was fo painful, that I knew not what would become of me. I vifited the Places where I had before enjoyed his amiable Prefence, but I found there nothing but Horror. The more I fought him, the more I found myfelf with my Mifery. This made me fhed many bitter Tears; and I found thofe Words of our Lord to his Difciples verified in me, *John xvi. 16. A little while and ye fhall not fee me.* The Difciples underftood not that faying; but he explained it, by declaring what fhould happen to them in the Time, when they fhould not fee him: Verfe 20. *Verily I fay unto you, that ye fhall weep and lament, but the World fhall rejoice, but ye fhall be sorrowful*: and in the next Verfe, he compares their Diffrefs to that of a Wo-

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man in Labour ; but at the same Time he comforts them, saying, Verse 22. *I will see you again, and your Heart shall rejoice, and no one shall deprive you of your Joy.* This State of Grief and Anguish is also treated of in very many other Places of Scripture, as well in the Prophets, as in the Book of Psalms.

The proper Source of this Grief, is the Knowledge of ourselves, by which we find that there is an extream Unlikeness between God and us. We see ourselves most opposite to him, and that our Fund is entirely corrupted, depraved, and full of all kind of Evil and Malignity, such as Self-Will, Self-Love, Vainglory, and in a Word, all the Injustice which Selfishness includes: and thus I found within me Sin, Death, Satan, Hell, the World, the Flesh, and all Sorts of Abominations.

You may imagine what a Consternation I was in ; it was so great, that, in short, if the God of Mercy had not, by his infinite Love, drawn me to him, I should never have presumed to have gone to him, so extream was the Shame and Confusion that covered me. Even yet, when I reflect upon it,

it, I say to him sometimes, How, O my God, could I be so presumptuous, as to offer you such an Heart, so impure, so depraved, and corrupted! Alas, I knew not that I was in such a depraved Condition, until thy Goodness manifested it to me! Yet blessed be thy holy Name for this unspeakable Benefit, I mean, that thou hast discovered to me my Corruption, that thou mightest deliver me from it. It is indeed thy principal Business to exercise Man, and bring him home to his own Heart, that he may at length become capable to enjoy thee, *for thy Delights are to dwell with Man*; but first the dwelling Place must be cleansed and purified, for thou art the holy One, before whom no Impurity may subsist, and whom only the Pure in Heart can see. The Love of Pleasure, the Love of Creatures, Concupiscence, and Selfishness; all these must be done away: They must be not only mortified, but dead, to render us capable of thy Communications.

It is for this thou hast so often invited, and even besought us, that we would come to thee, that thou mightest be our Deliverer, our Physician, and our Saviour; it is for  
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this thou didst forsake thy Glory, and endure so much Pain and Misery upon Earth, even that thou mightest reduce wandering Sinners, and exterminate Sin. O how horrid a Mischief must Sin be in thy Sight, seeing it has cost thee so dear to expiate it: O what Bitterness of Grief, what Agonies of Pain, possessed thee, when the bloody Sweat trickled down thy sacred Body on the Ground! O the powerful and piercing Love which thou didst bear towards Souls! That great Love still constraineth thee to accomplish thy holy Work in us. Those who persevere in the interior, *i. e.* spiritual Life, know it well: but to express what they experience, is impossible. May the Lord be eternally praised, honoured, and magnified by his whole Creation. *Amen.*

Thus I have, my dear Friend, told you somewhat of my own State: take it in good Part. I could not forbear to discharge my Mind a little in your Bosom. Though I am absent from you in Body, yet I cease not to have you in my Heart. I also know that the Lord will not forsake you; and though in Time you will grow worse and worse, yet be not amazed at it, nor despair  
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of the Goodness of God, for such are the Ways through which he leads his chosen and best beloved Souls, and wherein he makes use of infinite Means, to make us come to the Knowledge of ourselves; and hereby we see, how exceeding great his Love is towards us.

I am not ignorant, my dear Friend, that you have many Crosses and Afflictions, but they will all turn to your Good. The divine Spouse of your Soul will direct them all to your Advantage; only continue faithful to him unto the Death, and, so far is he from forsaking you, he will certainly protect you from all Danger. Your Soul is dear and precious to him, and he keeps it as the Apple of his Eye. He holds it secure in his Hand, that none may ravish it from him. Neither Men, nor Satan, can hurt it. Your Saviour is your Defender. He will be your Buckler and exceeding great Reward, for he is Love, and Love must be communicative, and impart itself to others. I have found so by Experience; but my Pen is not capable of expressing the exceeding great Love, which he has shewed to so unworthy a Creature as I am. But if  
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the Lord has vouchsafed so great Favours to such a Wretch (and God knows what Reason I have to call myself so) what shall not those, who are faithful to him, find at his Hands?

Do you then cast all your Cares upon him, that he may conduct you, and give you such Success as he thinks fit. He will be your Guide through all the Ways he makes you to walk in. And though you sink deep in the Waters of Affliction, so that they come in even to your Soul, and seem ready to overflow it; yet the Lover of your Soul will help you out again: for, as I said, he is Love itself; and that Love being God, is so powerful, so jealous, so inflamed, so penetrating, that I know not what Name to call it by; its Force and Efficacy are unutterable: the Floods and Tempests of Affliction, instead of quenching it, serve rather to make it more enflamed in our Soul, even to such a Degree, that sometimes she dissolves, as it were, in the sacred Ardors of Love, especially in those Moments, when the Lord makes her know, in a sensible Manner, that he would rather choose to suffer over again all the Griefs

Griefs and Pains of his Passion, than forsake her.

O my dear Friend, what a great and incomparable Love is this! Be then of good Courage. That Love can well conduct you, and bring Matters to a good Conclusion, although you seem to find yourself daily more and more indisposed. Know it is this Love himself who discovers to you your Indispositions, and the Disorders of your Soul, only to deliver you from them, and thereby to prepare you for himself, and render you acceptable in his Sight; for he desires to dwell in you according to his gracious Promise, *John xiv. 23. We will come unto you, and make our Abode with you.* Certainly for the Entertainment of such Guests, so worthy of all Honour and Praise, the Place ought to be well and duly prepared, according to the Quality of those who are to dwell there.

O strange Humiliation of the divine Majesty, to stoop so low, as to concern himself with the Abominations of Sin, that he might cleanse our Hearts from it, and prepare in them a Place for himself! Offer him then your Heart continually, for that  
End.



End. I know well in what Condition you will be, as you come nearer to him, but so his Love always proceeds; for, as I told you, he makes us know ourselves, and our Wretchedness, on Purpose only to deliver us from ourselves, that is, from Evil.

The most deplorable Wretchedness is to continue in Sin, for that is to continue separated from God: Sin being the only Thing that hinders our Union with him. I believe, and know, O Lord, that thou canst deliver me from my Sin; that thou art the Truth, which canst set me free from self: and yet I bless thy holy Name, that thou hast vouchsafed to make me know this *Self*, and what it is capable of. The Knowledge of myself ought to humble me, not only before God, but also before the Creatures too; and particularly, it ought to cure me of all Inclination to judge my Neighbour, and make me for the future never complain of any Body but myself.

That is a notable Fault, and yet a very common one; I mean Censoriousness, and perpetual finding Fault with others; whence it often happens, that even the Servants of God are suspected, and Men warn one ano-

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ther to be aware of them, while they are actually employed by God, as his Instruments to reclaim Men to his Service. All this comes from our Ignorance of ourselves; for if we knew ourselves, we should rather warn Men to be aware of us, for fear of being infected with our Corruption. May the Lord vouchsafe to open our Eyes, that we may see our own Darknes, and our own Faults.

O Father of Mercies, may I find Acceptance in thy Sight, and with my Prayers and Tears, obtain of thee an Heart sunk in the profoundest Humility! I ask not Joy, nor Consolation; I ask only a pliant Heart, a Heart always submissive and resigned to thee in all Accidents, or whatever ill Usage may happen to me. Dispose of me as thou pleasest, and may thy Will be done, O God, in Time, and in Eternity! *Amen.*

O dearest Friend, methinks I cannot leave off Writing, my Heart is so enlarged towards you, you employ it Night and Day. Well then, let Love have its Way: I speak not of any natural Affection, but of a supernatural Love, which the Lord himself produces in the Soul; that Love which is  
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shed abroad in our Hearts by the Holy Ghost. This divine Love has no private, selfish Motive or Aim : It seeks not Delight, or the Charms of an outward Friendship, its own Act suffices it. And though it should meet Crosses and Sufferings from the beloved Object, yet they would not discourage it : Nay more, though it were to die by the Hands of the Beloved, yet would it applaud the Execution, and at the same Time do all it could to serve him : so powerful is the Ardor of this true and divine Love. *Job xiii. 5.*

But who is the Beloved, to whom it thus adheres ? It is he from whom it drew its Existence ; it is its own Source and Original, who makes it what it is ; who so powerfully inflames it, that it is no more solicitous about Sufferings or Enjoyments, provided only that it may love : To love suffices Love.

This is what all Self-Love is absolutely incapable of : for Nature is ever seeking her own Satisfaction : She seeks Comfort and Delight, as well in God, as in the Creatures ; and when she misses them, grows uneasy and dissatisfied. She fancies that

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every Thing belongs to her, she would have her Share in every Thing. She is ignorant that she has no Claim to any Thing, that she must die, and be destroyed; and if she knew it beforehand, she would pine away with Grief and Despair.

For Nature will not consent to Sufferings, and she dreads them, so that she shudders for Fear; and yet she must go through them: but the Lord at first conceals them, and after makes her enter into them when he thinks fit. And then she must go on whether she will or no, for all Resistance is vain. Blessed be the Lord, that then he has no Regard to her Complaint; Nature only detains the Soul in Prison, and the Lord will deliver it hence, having redeemed it with his own Blood. The precious Soul has cost him too dear to forsake or neglect it, till he has brought it back to its Source, that is himself, that he may enjoy him.

Such Love does the Lord bear to the Soul of Man; and whatever Opposition its Enemies, the Flesh and Satan, may make to detain the Soul captive in their Chains, all their Efforts will be confounded under  
his



his Almighty Power. He is *the stronger*, who will come upon them and overcome them, and divide their Spoils, *Luke xi. 22.* He, in a Word, is the King and Conqueror of the Soul's Enemies: He is a Buckler and Defence, upon which the Soul may securely rely; and he will re-establish its Peace for the Love he beareth it.

Indeed his Love of Souls is so exceeding great, that it is impossible to describe or express what one feels of it. He is their Surety, their Corner Stone, and their Support. If the Soul be weak, let it come to him, and he will be its Strength; if it be sick, he will be its Physician; if it be hungry, he will feed it with Love; if it be thirsty, he will give himself to it for Refreshment; if it be in Darkness, he will enlighten it; if it be encompassed with Enemies, he will defend it; the Soul need only keep quiet and retired within itself, and Love will do all the rest, for his is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Let us, my dear Friend, from this Time forward, pass our Life in a spiritual Recollection. Let us always turn our Attention

inward; and although we find there Pain and Uneasiness, yet let us remember, that such is the Will of him, who loves us, and will make all Things work together for our Good. Let us receive all then as from his Hand, without Distinction or Exception. How happy should we be, if the View and Sense of our Wretchedness would but make us obtain Humility! My Desires are exceedingly inflamed for an Heart perfectly obedient. I seek not Sweetnesses nor Consolations, I wish only for an Heart perfectly submit to God. — But you think I shall never have done. Indeed, I cannot but wonder to see my Pen-run on so. O Lord of Lords, O Fountain of Love and Goodness, grant me such an Heart, subjected to thee, and humbled beneath all Men! O Lord, thou knowest what I am, and I too partly know it, for thy Goodness has discovered it to me; and may thy Name be ever blessed for that Benefit! O that this would sink me continually in the Abyss of my nothing! Grant, O Lord, that I may never make any Account of myself, or imagine myself something, for that would be to fall from thee, and give Place to Satan. O let

me

me rather live a Life of continual Affliction with my crucified Jesus! Jesus, whom I heartily beseech to be my dear Friend's Defender. When you bear his holy Cross, you will then be adorned with those Jewels, which your sacred Lover bestows upon you, even the same he wore himself; with which I recommend you to his Love, beseeching him to preserve you from all Evil.

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*P O S T S C R I P T.*

IF we watched over our Hearts continually, we should soon attain the effectual Knowledge of ourselves. Many Men aspire after sublime Sciences, and are very industrious in refined Enquiries concerning the Nature and Origin of Jesus Christ; but to what Purpose is all our Knowledge, unless Christ be formed and brought forth in our Hearts, and unless we believe, that he, and only he, can deliver us from that Obstacle, which would separate us eternally from God, I mean our Sins? Take in

80 *A Letter concerning Regeneration.*

good Part the plain Open-heartedness of this  
long Letter, and believe me,

*Yours, &c.*

MARY HENRICS.



SELECT



his  
C. Salazar de la Universidad de  
Lima 1788

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S. SELECT  
LETTERS  
AND  
DISCOURSES,

By Mr FENELON, Bishop of Cambray.

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*The First LETTER.*

To the Duke of *BURGUNDY*.

*Of the Love of God.*

I AM persuaded, my Lord, that the only true Way of loving our Neighbours according to the Obligations of Christianity, is to love them in God, and for his Sake ; so that our Regard for them be the Effect of our Love for God. But the Love of God is little known among Men, and their Ignorance makes them fear it, and keep at a Distance from it. They can form no Notion of that sweet Familiarity, wherewith the most tender of all Parents treats his Children. They know only an Austere and Almighty Master ; they think of him with a servile Dread, and behave towards him with a forced and natural Constraint. They do *Well* with Regret, and they would do Ill if they durst, and could promise themselves

selves Impunity. To love God, seems a burdensome Obligation, they seek to elude it by Formalities and outward Worship, which they would ever substitute in the Place of a sincere and effectual Love; they even chicane and cavil with him, that they may give him the least they can: whereas, if they had once known by Experience what it is to love God, they would renounce all other Joys for the Sake of it.

All *this* Love requires, is an orderly and innocent Life; only that we should do that for God's Sake, which the Dictates of our own Reason oblige us to; only, I say, that we should do those Things for the Love of God, which the honest Men of the World do from Principles of Honour and Self-love. We need abstain only from those Things which Reason forbids, and for all besides, leave it in the Order which God has established in the World: Let us act with Honour and Virtue, but let us do so only for his Sake, from whom we receive, and to whom we owe all Things.

The Love of God requires not of the Generality of Christians such Austerities as those of the ancient Hermits, either their  
Retire-



Retirement, or their Contemplation. It commonly requires no extraordinary or heroic Efforts, no Renunciation of lawful Possessions, nor to depart from the Advantages which our Rank in the World entitle us to. It obliges us only to be just and moderate in the lawful Use of these Things. It only forbids us to idolize them, and place our Happiness in possessing them; we are freely allowed to use them according to his Appointment, and thereby to tend to him.

Nor does this Love encrease our Crosses, they are already sowed thick in all Conditions of Life. They spring from the Infirmities of our Bodies, and the Passions of our Minds: they come from our own Imperfections, and those of other Men, with whom we converse: It is not therefore the Love of God which gives us these Troubles; but, on the contrary, it sweetens them to us by the Consolation wherewith it seasons our Sufferings. It even diminishes our Crosses, in the same Degree that it moderates our Passions and our Resentments, which are indeed the Source of all the real Evils that happen to us. If the Love of God were perfected in us, by making us fit loose

loose to all we now fear to lose, or seek to get; it would put an End to all our Grievs, and fill us with a blissful Peace and Contentment.

Why then should Men so much fear a Love, which occasions no Suffering, which can sweeten all, and brings with it every solid Good? They are much their own Enemies, who fear and withstand this Love.

The Command of Love is so far from being an additional Burden to the other Commandments, that, on the contrary, it renders them easy and pleasant. What we do out of Fear, and without Love, is always irksome, hard, and painful: What we do out of Love, and from our own free Choice, although difficult in itself, becomes upon that Account pleasing to us. Our Desire to please the God we love makes us, if we suffer, love to suffer; and a Suffering which one loves, is no longer a Suffering.

This Love changes nothing in the Order, which God has established. It leaves the Great in their Grandeur, making them humble before *him*, who has made them Great. It leaves the Mean in their Meanness, rendering them content to be nothing,  
but

but in him. Such Contentment, in the lowest Place, is not indeed Meanness, but constitutes the true Grandeur.

This Love regulates and animates all other Loves, which we owe to the Creatures. We never love our Neighbour so well, as when we love him for God's Sake, and with that Charity, which his Spirit sheds abroad in our Hearts. When we love Men without regard to God, it is always from Principles of Self-Interest. That Interest may be of a grosser Kind, as for the Sake of their Wealth or Favour; or more subtil and disguised, as the Vanity of Loving disinterestedly, some particular Fancy, or the Pleasure of being loved by Persons of Merit; but still Interest is our Motive, and Self-Love is at the Bottom, which we would disguise under the Name of a generous Friendship.

The true Way therefore of Loving our Friends, is to love them in the Order of God, to love God in them, to love *what* God has given them, and to bear patiently for his Sake the Want of *what* he has not given. When Self-Love is the Motive of our Friendship, as that is impatient, excep-  
tious,

tious, jealous, full of Wants, and void of Merit, it is ever distrustful of itself and its Friend: It tires; it is disgusted; it soon sees an End of what it thought greatest; it is ever disappointed; it would always have Perfection, but never finds it: It is captious, changeable, and restless. But divine Love, as it is disinterested, makes us love our Friends with Allowance for their Faults: It expects not more in them, than God has put there: It regards only God, and his Gifts: It thinks all right, provided it loves *what* God has given, and bears with *what* he has not given, but permits, and would have us bear with in Conformity to his Designs.

Divine Love never expects Perfection in the Creature: It knoweth *that* to be only in God, and delights in saying to him, *Who is like unto thee?* All it sees imperfect, makes it say, Thou art not my God. Hence as it expects Perfection in no Creature, it is never disappointed. It loves God and his Gifts in every Creature, according to the Degrees of Goodness in each. It loves less, what is less good; it loves more, what is better. It loves all, because none are quite destitute of the Gifts of God; and the wickedest



edest of Men are, while this Life lasts, capable of becoming good, and receiving the Gifts which they want.

He loves for God's Sake all that God has made, and has commanded him to love. He loves more, what God would have more dear to him. He regards in an earthly Parent his heavenly Father; and in every kind of Relation, the respective Alliances which Providence has made. For we cannot love God, without loving the Things he hath commanded us to love. That they are his Work, and that he commands us to love them, is a double Motive to our Charity.

It is true indeed, that we should rather choose to die, than to love any Thing more than God; for he saith in his Gospel, *If any Man love Father or Mother more than me, he is not worthy of me.* Nor can it be that we should love any Thing more than God, which we love only for his Sake. But I love heartily for his Sake all his Images, all that contain his Gifts, all that he would have me love. From this solid Principle, I should not be wanting to any, neither Relations nor Friends. Their Faults will not surprize me, for I expect Imperfection in every

90      *How to distinguish the Motions*

every Thing that is not my God. I see only him, in whatever has the least Degree of Goodness: it is him I love in his Creature, and nothing can change that Love. That Love indeed is not always fond and sensible, but it is real, faithful, constant and effectual; and such as, in my deliberate Will, I prefer to all other Love.

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*How to distinguish the Motions of Grace from  
those of Nature.*

To the same.

**I** Have considered the Difficulty you find in distinguishing the Motions of Grace from those of disguised Nature. We cannot have any certain and precise Rule for this within ourselves, but must judge by the outward Conformity of our Actions to the Precepts and Counsels of the Gospel. If we had besides this any inward Rule to discern the supernatural Principle from that of Nature, with an infallible Certainty, we might then have a certain Assurance of our own Holiness, and an Infallibility to conduct

duct ourselves by Inspiration: but this is directly contrary to the Obscurity of the Life of Faith, the Uncertainty of a State of Pilgrimage, and that Dependance wherein we ought to live with Regard to our Superiors.

We ought not therefore to seek what is incompatible with our present Condition; I mean, such a certain Rule for distinguishing the Motions of Grace from those of Nature, which can but too well imitate it; and yet, on the other Hand, it seems most important for defending us from Delusion, that we should have such a Rule: We are obliged to follow the Attractions of Grace, else we resist God, and grieve his Spirit; but how can we follow the Attractions of Grace, without a certain Rule to distinguish them from the specious Motions of disguised Nature? This is the Difficulty, let us now seek a Remedy for it.

This Difficulty can have no Place (as I have shewed already) in Things forbidden by the Precepts or Counsels of the Gospel: The Attractions of Grace can never incline to any Thing contrary to these; so that the Purity of Morals are hereby secured absolutely

lutely in all Cases, and all the Doubt that can remain, is only to distinguish between good Actions, which of them is the most conformable to the Attractions of Grace.

It is true indeed that we have no inward Assurance in making this Choice. We have only the outward Circumstances with the Laws of Christian Prudence to determine us, but we have no certain inward Rule to assure us, whether our Inclination for one good Work, rather than another, springs from Grace or Nature. What should give us full Satisfaction here is, that it is not consistent with our present State to have such a certain and infallible Assurance concerning our Actions. It is the Will of God that we should be kept in Obscurity and Uncertainty concerning our own Righteousness, which we should not be if we had a clear Discernment of all the Operations of Grace. That Grace therefore must of Necessity be accommodated to the Darkness of our State, and operate with continual Obscurity.

Nor indeed is it to be wondered at, that we should be ignorant, whether we act purely from the Principles of Grace, when we  
have



have no certain Assurance even that we are in a State of Grace ; we are so liable to the Delusions of Self-Love in the most dangerous Instance, (for we may mistake even a State of Death for the spiritual Life) that these venial Errors concerning good Actions, ought not to seem strange to us. But what must we do in this dark Night ? Even what we can, and then rest satisfied. This Conduct of Fidelity and Peace (Fidelity, in doing the best we can, and Peace, in being satisfied with it) in so painful an Uncertainty, is a cruel Martyrdom to Souls, who are very zealous for their spiritual Advancement. It is true indeed, that notwithstanding the Uncertainty of our Pilgrimage, there are some, though uncertain Appearances, which may serve to nourish within us an humble Confidence, that we are in a State of Grace : there are also certain Glimmerings of Grace, amidst the Darknes of the obscurest Faith ; which, from Time to Time, give us transient Discoveries of our following the Attraction of Love, and advancing towards Perfection. But when God thinks fit to mingle Light and Darknes, Light sufficient to preserve us from  
Error,

Error, and Darknefs sufficient to prevent a total Security ; He so blends these two together, that it is not possible to separate them, or find any Thing fixed and certain whereon we may rely with Assurance.

The best Marks, that we act by Grace, are *first*, When the Action is pure, and perfectly agreeable to the evangelical Counsels. *Secondly*, When it is performed in Singleness of Heart, in Tranquillity, without Eagerness, and in a Disposition to desist willingly, if Duty should so require. *Thirdly*, When after it is performed, one does not dwell upon it, with Anxiety to have it approved, but leave it to the Judgment of God. *Fourthly*, When it leaves the Mind in Peace, Simplicity, and Humility.

All these Marks indeed are of a subtle, delicate Nature, and such as cannot be expressed, so as to give a sensible Demonstration. But although the Application of them is always mingled with such Darknefs as is proper to a State of Faith ; yet this is certain, that God, without prescribing such fixed Rules as might serve for a sensible Support, accustoms the Soul to hear his Voice, to know it, and to follow it, although

though she cannot account, by philosophical Principles, for the precise Rule by which she judges. He gives her transient Assurances upon proper Occasions, and again withdraws them, without leaving any Traces behind. The great Danger is, lest we should interrupt his Work by Disquietudes, and an Impatience to act contrary to what our State requires, and see our Way distinctly in the midst of Darkness, through which we must advance incessantly, as it were feeling out our Way.

I have but one Thing more to observe, which is, that we can oftner distinguish what comes from Nature, than what from Grace. Your Business therefore, is not to hearken to the Suggestions of Nature, whether they come from Laziness, or Hastiness, from refined Reasonings, or gross Sensuality, but let them all drop as it were, and pass out of your Mind, without interrupting your inward Peace of Spirit. In this Peace, follow simply what your Heart dictates to you as best before God, for dying to yourself, and pleasing the Beloved. This is the surest Rule which the Obscurity of our present State will admit of. *If by the Spi-*  
*rit*

96 *How to distinguish the Motions, &c.*

*rit ye mortify the Deeds of the Flesh, ye shall live, Rom. viii. 13.*

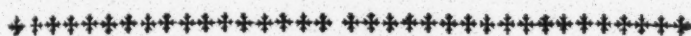
But great Care must be taken to avoid falling into Scrupulosity, and a dangerous Trouble of Mind, about methodizing all our Doings in such Manner, that we may be assured we act therein by Grace. This would be to extinguish Grace, by endeavouring to get an Assurance that we follow it; and under Pretence of greater Security, to enter again into all the Researches of that Self-Love, which we would fly from. It would be losing the real Attractions of Grace, by seeking in them such Certainties as God never intended. It would be to pass our Lives in vain Reasonings about the Operations of Grace, without ever resigning ourselves to its Conduct; and, in a Word, to follow Nature, by searching other Evidences of Grace than the present State will admit of.







*Pious Reflections for every Day of the  
Month.*



D A Y I.

*How scarce true Faith is.*

I.

**W**HEN the Son of Man cometh, shall  
he find Faith on the Earth? Luke  
xviii. 8. If he should now come, would  
he find it in us? What Fruits of Faith  
have we to shew? Do we look upon this  
Life, only as a short Passage to a better?  
Do we believe that we must suffer with  
Jesus Christ, before we can reign with him?  
Do we consider this World as a deceitful  
Appearance, and Death as the Entrance to  
true Goods? Do we live by Faith? Does  
it animate us? Do we relish the eternal  
Truths it presents us with? Are we as  
careful to nourish our Souls with those  
Truths, as to maintain our Bodies with pro-  
per Diet? Do we accustom ourselves to see  
all Things in the Light of Faith? Do we

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correct

correct all our Judgments by it? Alas, the greater Part of Christians think and act like mere Heathens. If we judge (as we justly may) of their Faith by their Practice, we must conclude they have no Faith at all.

## II.

LET us fear, lest the Kingdom of God should be taken from us, and given to others who may bear better Fruits. *That Kingdom of God* is Faith reigning in us, and governing all our Thoughts. Happy he, who has Eyes to see this Kingdom. Flesh and Blood cannot discern it. The Wisdom of the animal Man is wilfully blind to it. The inward Operations of God appear as a Dream to him. To know the Wonders of God's Kingdom, we must be born again; and to be born again, we must die: this is what the World cannot consent to. Let the World then despise, and censure, and condemn the Truth, as it pleases: As for us, O Lord, thou hast commanded us to believe, *and to taste thy heavenly Gift*. We desire to be of the Number of thine Elect, and we know that no Person can be of that Number, who does not conform his Life to what thou teachest.

DAY

D A Y II.

*Of the only Way to Heaven.*

I.

*STRIVE to enter in at the strait Gate,*

Matt. vii. 13. The Kingdom of Heaven is not to be entered but by Violence : It must be taken, as it were, by Assault, like a besieged Place. The Gate is strait and narrow, we must bow, we must bend, we must make ourselves little, to gain Admittance. The great Gate, which opens wide, and is passed by Multitudes, leads to Perdition. All broad and smooth Ways are dangerous. Wo to us, when the World favours us, and our Life seems void of Trouble. Crosses and Difficulties are the surest Marks of the Way to Heaven. Let us be aware therefore of going on with the Multitude, and let us seek the Traces of the Few ; let us follow the Footsteps of the Saints along the craggy Paths of Repentance ; climbing over Rocks, seeking secure Places in the Sweat of our Face, and expecting that the last Step of our Lives should be still a violent Struggle to enter the narrow Gate of Eternity.

## II.

WE are not predestinated by God, but to be made conformable to the Image of his Son; to be fastned, as he was, to a Cross, renouncing, as he did, all sensual Pleasures; and to be content, like him, in the midst of Sufferings. But, blind as we are, we would get down from this Cross, which unites us to our Master. We cannot leave the Cross, but we must also forsake Christ crucified; for the Cross and He are inseparable. Let us then live and die with him, who came to shew us the true Way to Heaven; and let our only Fear be, lest we should not finish our Sacrifice on the same Altar, whereon his was consummated. Alas! all our Endeavours here tend only to be more at Ease, and thereby to withdraw ourselves from the true Way to Heaven. We know not what to do. We do not comprehend the Mystery of Grace, which joins a Beatitude with Tears, pronouncing the Mourners happy. The Way which leads to a Throne, is delightful, although it should be overgrown with Thorns. The Way which leads to a Precipice, is dreadful, although it should be covered with Roses. We suffer



fer indeed in the strait Way, but we hope :  
We suffer, but we see Heaven open : We  
suffer, but we choose to suffer ; we love  
God, and are beloved of him.

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D A Y III.

*Of true Devotion.*

I.

**H**OW frequently do Men deceive themselves by that vain Religion which St *James* warns us of, Chap. i. 26. Some think it consists in saying over many Prayers ; others, in doing many outward Works to the Glory of God and Service of our Neighbour. Some place it in continual Desires of Salvation, and others in great Mortifications. These Things are all good, and even necessary to a certain Degree, but none of these is the Principal Thing, or Essence of true Piety. That Piety by which we are sanctified, and entirely devoted to God, consists in doing his Will precisely in all Circumstances of Life. Take what Steps you please, do what good Works you will, yet shall you not be rewarded, but for

having done the Will of the Sovereign Master. Although your Servant should do Wonders, yet if he did not that very Business which you would have done, you would not value his Performances, and might justly complain of him for a bad Servant.

## II.

THAT perfect Devoting ourselves to God, from which Devotion has its Name, requires not only that we should do the Will of God, but also, that we should do it with Love. *He loveth a chearful Giver*, and without the Heart, no Obedience is acceptable to him. We ought to think it a Happiness to serve such a Master. Let me add, that this Devoting ourselves to God, must be habitual; we must be alike resigned to him in all Circumstances, even those that are most opposite to our Views, our Inclinations, and our Projects; and it must keep us in a constant Readiness to part with our Estate, our Time, our Liberty, our Life, and our Reputation. To be effectually in this Disposition, is to have true Devotion. But as the Will of God is often hid from us, there is still one Step farther to make in this renouncing ourselves; it is to do the  
divine

divine Will with a blind Obedience, I say a blind, but yet judicious Obedience. This is what all Men are obliged to ; even those who are most enlightened, and capable to lead others to God, must themselves submit to be led by him.

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D A Y IV.

*Concerning Imperfect Conversions.*

I.

SOME Persons, who have been long estranged from God, and are, as it were, at a great Distance from him, think their Return to him perfect, as soon as they have taken a few Steps towards it. The most polite and sensible Men are, upon this Occasion, as ignorant and absurd, as some Country Clown, who should think himself well at Court, because he had seen the King. They have forsaken the more heinous Kind of Vices, their Way of living is less criminal than it used to be. And then they judge of themselves, not by the Gospel (the only sure Rule) but by comparing their present Life with their former.

By these Means they persuade themselves, that they are in a safe Condition ; and take no farther Care for their Salvation. This State perhaps is more dangerous, than that of notorious Sinners ; for the Condition of these last may some time or other trouble their Consciences, and put them upon Endeavours of Amendment : But the imperfect Conversion of the former, serves only to stifle the Remorse of Conscience, to give them a false Security, and render their Malady incurable.

## II.

I have examined my past Life, faith one, and remarked the Faults of it : I read good Books, I go to Church constantly, and I say my Prayers, as I think, heartily enough. I now refrain from all great Sins at least ; but I cannot say, that I am so far affected, as to live as if I did not belong to the World, and kept no Measures with it. Religion would be too rigorous, if it left no Room for some mollifying Expedients. The Refinements in Devotion, which some propose to us, are carried too far, and serve only to discourage Men.— Such are the Sentiments of a lukewarm Christian, who  
would



would purchase Heaven at a cheap Rate, who considers not what is due to God, nor what it has cost those, who have attained the Enjoyment of him. A Man of this Character, is still far from a true Conversion: He knows neither the Extent of God's Law, nor the Duties of Repentance. If he had been to make the Gospel, it would have been a different Kind of Institution, and more indulgent to Self-Love. But the Gospel is unchangeable; and by that we shall be judged at the last Day.

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# D A Y V.

*Of Renouncing the World.\**

## I.

**L**OVE not the World, neither the Things that are in the World, 1 John ii. 15.

How comprehensive are these Words? The

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World

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\* The Meditation for this Day in the *French*, turns so much upon the different Senses of the Word *Espri* which cannot be rendered into *English*; that it was thought proper to substitute this, taken from another Part of the Author, in its stead.

World is that blind and depraved Multitude, which Jesus Christ condemns in his Gospel, and for which he refused to pray at his Death. The World, in one Word, is all those who love themselves, or the Creatures, without Regard to God: We are then that World ourselves, as long as we so love ourselves, and seek that in the Creatures, which can be found only in God. Happy that holy Apostle, *to whom the World was crucified, and he crucified to the World*, Gal. vi. 4.

## II.

W H A T a Happiness is it to be convinced, how truly contemptible the World is! He that parts with the World for God, parts with but a Trifle; and they are lamentably weak, who think they have done some great Matter in forsaking it. Every Christian has already renounced it in his Baptism; those who live in the strictest Retirement, only keep to that Engagement with more Precaution than others. To seek the Haven, is to fly the Storm.



DAY

## D A Y VI.

*Of Patience in Sufferings.*

## I.

*I*N your Patience possess ye your Souls, Luke xxi. 19. The Soul loses itself by Impatience ; whereas, when it submits without repining, it possesses itself in Peace, and it also possesses God. To be impatient, is to will what one has not ; or not to will what one has. An impatient Soul is a Slave to Passion, having cast off the Restraints of Reason and Faith: What Weakness ! What Error is this ! As long as we *will* the Evil we endure, it is not Evil ; why then should we make it a real Evil, by refusing to bear it willingly ? The inward Peace resides, not in the Senses or inferior Appetites, but in the Will. It may be preserved amidst the bitterest Sorrows, as long as the Will continues in a firm Resignation. Peace here below, consists not in an Exemption from Sufferings, but in a voluntary Acceptance of it.

T O

## II.

TO hear your murmuring and repining, it would seem that you are the most innocent Soul living; and that it is great Injustice, that you are not admitted into the terrestrial Paradise. Remember how you have offended God, and you must acknowledge his righteous Dealing with you. Confess to him, with the Humility of the Prodigal Son, *Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and thee*: I know how I am indebted to thy Justice, but I have not myself the Courage to discharge the Debt. If it were left to me, I should deceive, I should spare, I should betray myself. But thy merciful Hand executes what I should never have had the Courage to do; it corrects me in Love. Grant also that I may endure with Patience its salutary Corrections. If a Sinner has a just Indignation against himself, the least he can do is, to receive the Penance, which he has not the Fortitude to choose.



DAY



D A Y VII.

*Of Submission and Conformity to the Will  
of God.*

I.

**THY** Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven. Nothing is done here, any more than in Heaven, but by the Will or Permission of God; but Men do not always love that Will, because it is often opposite to their Desires. If we sincerely loved this Will of God, and only this, we should change our Earth into an Heaven. We should thank God for every Thing, for Evil, as well as Good; because Evil would become Good from his Hand. We should not then murmur at the Guidance of Providence; but approve, and adore it. O my God, what do I see in the Course of the Stars, in the Revolutions of Seasons, in the Events of Life, but the Accomplishment of thy Will: May it also be accomplished in me: May I love it: May it sweeten and endear all Events to me: May I annihilate my own, to make thy Will reign in me. For it is thine, O Lord, to will, and mine to obey.

THOU

## II.

THOU hast said, O Lord Jesus, of thyself, with Relation to thy heavenly Father, *That thou always didst what pleased him*, John viii. 9. Teach us how far that Example should lead us. Thou art our Pattern. Thou didst nothing upon Earth, but according to the Will of *thy* Father, who vouchsafes also to be called *ours*. Do thou fulfil his Will in us, as thou didst in thyself. Grant, that we being inseparably united to thee, may never seek to do our own Will, but *his*; so that not only our religious Actions, but even our Eating, Sleeping, Conversing, may all be done with no other View, but that of pleasing him. Then shall our whole Conduct be sanctified. Then shall all our Deeds become a continual Sacrifice, incessant Prayer, and uninterrupted Love. When, O Lord, shall we arrive at this Disposition? Do thou vouchsafe to conduct us thither: Do thou vouchsafe to subdue our rebellious Will by thy Grace, for it knows not what it would have, and nothing is truly good, but a Conformity to *thy* Will.

DAY

D A Y VIII.

*Of Prayer.*

I.

*PRAY without ceasing, 1 Theff. v. 17.*

Such is our Dependance upon God, that we are obliged, not only to do every Thing for his Sake, but also to seek from him the very Power to do so. And this happy Necessity of having Recourse to him in all our Wants, instead of being grievous to us, should be our greatest Consolation. What a Happiness is it, that we are allowed to speak to him with Confidence, to open our Hearts, and hold familiar Conversation with him by Prayer? He himself invites us to it; and as *St Cyprian* well observes, we may judge how ready he is to give us those good Things which he himself solicits us to ask of him. Let us pray then with Faith, and not lose the Fruit of our Prayers, by a wavering Uncertainty; which, as *St James* testifies, hinders the Success of them. The same Apostle advises us to pray when we are in Trouble, because thereby we should  
find

find Consolation; yet we are so wretched, that this heavenly Employment is often a Burden, instead of a Comfort to us. The Lukewarmness of our Prayers is the Source of all our other Infidelities.

## II.

*ASK, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you, Matt. vii. 7.* If Riches were to be had for asking, with what Earnestness, Assiduity, and Perseverance, would Men ask for them? If Treasures were to be found with looking for, what Place would escape their Search? If by knocking they could gain Admittance into the King's Council, or the highest Places of Preference, what a knocking we should hear? Divine Grace is the only true Good, yet the only Thing they neglect; the only Thing which they have not Patience to wait for. The Promise of Christ is infallibly certain, and it is our own Fault, if we do not find the Effect of it.



DAY



D A Y IX.

*Of hearkening to the Voice of GOD.*

I.

**L**ORD, to whom shall we go? thou hast  
the Words of eternal Life, John vi. 16.

It is Jesus Christ who must be hearkened to: Men are no farther to be heard or believed, than as they have the Truth and Authority of Jesus Christ. Books are only so far good, as they teach us the Gospel. Let us go then to this sacred Source. He therefore only spoke and acted, that we may hear him, and apply ourselves to study the Particulars of his Life. Wretched as we are, we follow our own vain Thoughts, and neglect the Truth itself, whose Words give eternal Life. O uncreated Word, yet incarnate for me, make thyself understood in my Soul. Speak, Lord, for thy Servant heareth, and desireth to obey thee.

II.

MEN often say, that they would gladly know, what they could do to advance in Virtue. But when the Spirit of God has taught us what is to be done, our Courage often fails in the Execution. We easily see,  
that

that we are not what we ought to be; yet we think we do a great deal in barely wishing that we were better. All Kinds of wishing or willing, that are not strong enough to make us sacrifice whatever is an Obstacle to us in our Way to God, pass for nothing. Let us therefore no longer hold the Truth captive in an unrighteous Lukewarmness. Let us hear what God suggests to us. Let us prove the Spirit that moves us, to discern whether it be of God; and if it be, let nothing hinder our Obedience. The Psalmist prayed to God, not only to teach him his Will, but also to teach him to do it. *Teach me to do thy Will, for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good, lead me into the Land of Uprightness, Psalm cxliii. 10.*



## DAY X.

### *Of the right Use of Afflictions.*

#### I.

**T**HEY who are Christ's, have crucified the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts, Gal. v. 24. The more we fear Crosses, the more Reason have we to think that we want them:

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Let us not be discouraged, when the Hand of God layeth heavy ones upon us. We ought to judge of the Violence of our Disease, by the Violence of the Remedies, which our spiritual Physician prescribes us. It is a great Argument of our own Wretchedness, and of God's Mercy, that notwithstanding the Difficulty of our Recovery, he vouchsafes to undertake our Cure. Let us then draw from our very Afflictions a Source of Love, of Comfort, and Trust in God, saying with his Apostle, *Our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. Blessed are they which mourn, and sow in Tears, because they shall reap with ineffable Joy the Harvest of eternal Felicity.

II.

*I am crucified with Christ*, said St. Paul, we are fastned to the Cross with him, and by him; for his Grace keeps us there, and for his Sake we choose to continue there, lest by forsaking it, we should part from him. O suffering and adorable Jesus! to whose Sacrifice I unite myself, do thou communicate to me, together with thy Cross,  
also

also thy Spirit of Love and Resignation. Make me think less of my Sufferings, than of the Happiness of Suffering with thee. Make me love thee, and I shall not fear the Cross; and although my Sufferings should be very great, yet will they not be greater than I choose to endure.

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## D A Y XI.

### *Of Meekness and Humility.*

#### I.

**L**EARN of me, for I am meek, and lowly of Heart, Matt. xi. 29. If any other than Jesus had taught this Lesson, the Imperfection of the Teacher would have furnished us with Objections to the Doctrine. He therefore taught it himself, and that too by his own Example, which is such, as should silence all Objections; such as should make us adore, be confounded, and imitate. What, the Son of God descends from Heaven to Earth, takes a corruptible Body, and dies upon a Cross, to shame us out of our Pride! He who is All, annihilates himself; and I, who am nothing, would be,



at least would have others think me, quite other than what I am ! What an impudent Vanity, and diabolical Presumption is this, our Lord saith not, *Be ye meek and lowly* : but he saith, *I am meek and lowly of Heart* ; it is enough to know that he is humble, to conclude that we ought to be so. His Example is such an Authority, as none may find a Dispensation for, much less the Sinner, who may well choose Humility, when he has deserved Damnation.

II.

OUR Lord joins Meekness with Humility, because Humility is the Source of true Meekness. Pride is ever haughty, impatient, and captious ; but he who despises himself, is content to be despised. He who thinks nothing due to him, will not think himself neglected. The true Virtue of Meekness, is never the Effect of Constitution ; all Appearances of it, that are the Product of mere Nature, arise from Weakness, Indolence, or Cunning. To be meek towards others, we must renounce ourselves.

To Meekness, our Lord adds Lowliness of Heart ; it is no speculative Conviction  
he

he requires, but the real Bent and Inclination of the Heart; it is a Lowliness, to which the Will consents, and which it loves for the Glory of God; it is an entire Distrust of ourselves, our own Parts and Abilities, that we may owe our Cure to God alone. To despair at the Sight of our own Wretchedness, is not Humility, but a most abominable Kind of Pride.

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## D A Y XII.

### *Of the Faults of others.*

#### I.

**B**EAR ye one another's Burdens, Gal. vi. 2.

Charity does not require of us, that we should not see the Faults of others, but that we should avoid all needless and voluntary observing them; and that we should not be blind to their good Qualities, when we are so sharp-sighted to their bad ones. We should always remember what a Change God may every Moment work in the most unworthy of Men; we should bear in Mind the many Reasons we have to despise ourselves, and consider that true Charity, as it  
fees

sees all Things in the same Light that God does, must consequently extend itself to the meanest of his Creatures. Grace does not take away our Knowledge of what is contemptible, but it teaches us to bear with it in a devout Submission to the secret Designs of Providence. It does not permit us to humour ourselves in an impatient or disdainful Temper; and as it makes us principally regard, and only rely upon God, so it prevents our being disappointed or provoked at the Folly and Corruption we see in the World.

II.

WHAT, if others are weak, is that a Reason for your no longer keeping any Measures with them? You, that complain of their troubling you, do you give no Body any Trouble? You, that are so much shocked at the Faults you see, are you yourself without Fault? If all, to whom you have been burdensome, should return the Trouble they have had with you, you would be oppressed with the Weight. And besides, even supposing that Men had nothing to reproach you with, yet consider farther, what Obligations you lie under from God, to  
shew

shew that Forbearance towards others, for which you know you have such abundant Occasion at his Hands.

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### D A Y XIII.

*Of the one Thing necessary.*

#### I.

**T**HOU art troubled and careful about many Things, but one Thing is needful, Luke x. 41. We think we have many Businesſes to do, and we have but one. If that be performed, the others are included in it. If that miscarry, whatever Success the others may seem to have, they will all come to nothing. Why should we then divide our Heart, and our Care? O my only Business, thou shalt henceforward be my only Care! In the Ray of divine Light I will each Moment peaceably perform, according to my Abilities, what Providence puts in my Way. I will be careful for nothing else, because nothing else is my Business.

#### II.

*I have finished the Work which thou, O Father, gavest me to do, John vii. 4. Each*  
of



of us should be able to say as much at the Day of Judgment. I ought to consider the Business, which occurs in the daily Order of Providence, as the Work which God appoints me; and I should apply myself to it in a Manner worthy of God, *viz.* with Exactness, and with Tranquillity. I ought not to neglect any Thing, or be passionately vehement about any Thing, for it is dangerous to do the Work of the Lord negligently on the one Hand, or on the other, to appropriate it to ourselves by Self-Love and false Zeal: in this last Case, we do our Actions from a Principle of Self-Will; we are eager and anxious for the Success, and that under the Pretence of seeking the Glory of God. Thus Self-Love disguises itself under the Appearance of Zeal; and grieves, and is afflicted, when it miscarries in its Designs. O God, grant to me the Grace to be faithful in the Action, and resigned as to the Success! My only Business is to do *thy* Will, and to do it *as thy Will*, not forgetting thee in the Performance of it: It is thine to give my feeble Endeavours the Success thou pleasest, even none if thou seekest fit.

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DAY

## D A Y XIV.

*Of preparing for Death.*

## I.

**T**HOU Fool, *this Night shall thy Soul be required of thee; then whose shall those Things be which thou hast provided?* Luke xii. 20. Deplorable is the Blindness of Men, who will not think of Death, but divert their Minds continually from a Thing that is inevitable, and which they might render happy by thinking of it. Nothing is so dreadful as Death, to those who are fond of Life. It is strange, that the Experience of so many Ages should not make us judge solidly of the present, and of the future, so as to take proper Measures in the one for the other. We doat upon this World, as if it were never to have an End; and we neglect the next, as if it were never to have a Beginning.

## II.

**T**HЕРЕFORE *be ye also ready; for in such an Hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh,* Matt. xxiv. 44. These Words are addressed to every one of us in particular. Yet all Men (for few even among Persons

Persons of Piety are to be excepted) reckon upon a long Life, and form Projects accordingly. And what is the Reason of such an obstinate Hope of Life? 'tis because we love it passionately. And whence is it that we affect to remove Death to such a Distance from us? 'tis because we do not love the Kingdom of God, and the Grandeurs of the World to come. O gross and stupid Mortals, who cannot raise themselves above this Earth, wherein, even by their own Confession, they are miserable! The true manner of preparing for the last Moment, is to spend all the others well, and ever to expect that.

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D A Y XV.

*Of our Hopes in Eternity.*

I.

*EYE hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man, the Things which God hath prepared for them that Love him, 1 Cor. ii. 9. What Proportion is there betwixt what we do upon Earth, and what we hope for in Heaven?*

The Primitive Christians rejoiced through this Hope incessantly : Heaven seemed ever open before them. Neither Troubles, nor Disgraces ; neither Torments, nor cruel Death, could divert them from the View of it. They knew the infinite Bounty that was to reward their Pains ; therefore they thought they could never suffer enough. They were transported with Joy, when they were found worthy of some great Humiliation ; and we, lukewarm Souls, we would suffer nothing ; and the Reason is, because we want those Hopes that should support us. We sink under the lightest Crosses, even under those that spring from our own Pride, Folly, or Effeminacy.

## II.

*THOSE who sow in Tears, shall reap in Joy*, Psalm cxxv. 5. We must sow, that we may reap, and this Life is the Seed Time ; in the next, we shall reap the Fruit of our Labours. The carnal Man, lazy and hasty, would reap without sowing. We would serve God at a little Cost. We would have the Ways to him made wide, and smooth, and easy. To hope much, and suffer little, is what Self-Love aims at.

Blind



Blind that we are, shall we never see that the Kingdom of Heaven suffers Violence, and that only those who do themselves Violence, are worthy to enter into it? Let us mourn, and be in Grief here below, since *Blessed are they that mourn*: and Wo is pronounced to those, who receive their Consolation in this Life. The Time will come, when all vain Joys will be confounded. The World shall weep in its turn, and God shall wipe all Tears from our Eyes.

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D A Y XVI.

*Of our Daily Bread.*

I.

**G**IVE us this Day our daily Bread. By this Bread is meant, not only the bodily Food, which Providence supplies us with, but also that Nourishment of Truth, which he daily provides for our Souls; it is the Bread *which nourisheth to eternal Life*; which makes the Soul encrease, and grow strong in the Trials of Faith. This God allots us each Day, appointing precisely those inward Dispositions, and outward Circumstances,

which are most proper to make us advance in Faith and Self-Denial; and we receive our daily Bread from him, in accepting, as from his Hand, all his Appointments.

## II.

HUNGER is what gives a Relish to Food, and makes it digest. Why have we not an Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness? Why are not our spiritual Appetites as keen as those of the Body? We think the Man sick who has lost his Appetite: and so it is with our Souls; they languish, and are in an evil State, as long as they are without a spiritual Hunger for that Food, which cometh from God. The Nourishment of the Soul is Truth and Righteousness. To know what is truly *Good*, to be filled with it, to be strengthened by it, *that* is the spiritual Food, the Bread of Heaven we are to feed upon. Let us appear before God with the Earnestness of Beggars, who crave some Bread to subsist on. The worst Kind of Poverty is, not to be sensible of our Wants. Let us therefore read and pray with this mental Hunger, for what should feed our Souls; with this vehement Thirst, for that Water which springeth up into everlasting

lasting Life. Nothing but an earnest and continual Desire of Instruction, can qualify us for the Knowledge of the wondrous Things of God's Law. Every one receives this Knowledge only in the same Degree as he desires it. A great Degree of this Desire is the proper Preparation for receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper.

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D A Y XVII.

*Of Inward Peace.*

I.

**P**EACE I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you; not as the World giveth, give I unto you, John xiv. 27. All Men seek Peace, but they seek it where it is not to be found; they seek it in the World, which is ever promising, but can never give us a solid Peace: That is the Gift of Christ alone, who reconciles the Man to himself, subdues the Passions, sets Bounds to the Desires, inspires the Hopes of eternal Bliss, and gives the Joy of the Holy Ghost, such a Joy as persists in the midst of Sufferings, and flowing from an inexhaustible Source,

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becomes

becomes a perpetual Spring of Delight, which the World cannot interrupt or diminish.

## II.

TRUE Peace is not to be found but in the Possession of God; and the Possession of God cannot be attained but by Faith and Obedience: Remove all forbidden Objects: Renounce all unlawful Desires: Cast off all earnest Care and Anxiety: Desire only God: Seek only God: and then you shall have Peace, such a Peace as the World shall not be able to disturb. For what can trouble you? Is it Poverty, Disgrace, Disappointments, outward or inward Crosses? You should see all these in the Hand of God as real Favours, which he distributes to his Friends, and which he vouchsafes to give you a Share in. Then the World will have a new Appearance to you, and your Peace prove inviolable.

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## D A Y XVIII.

*Of Deceitful Joys.*

## I.

*I* Said of Laughter, it is mad: and of Mirth, what doth it? Eccles. ii. 2. The Joys  
of



of worldly-minded Men are like those of delirious Persons, who have lost their Reason by Distemper. Delusion is the only Cause of their Pleasure: they think themselves in Abundance, when in Reality they are quite destitute. Death will end this Dream of Folly, and when they awake, they shall be confounded at their Poverty. Miserable therefore are those, whom the false Pleasures of the World render incapable of true Consolation. Let us say continually of such vain Mirth, *what doth it?* Nothing is a solid Subject of Joy, but our Hopes of God's Favour; all other Delight is but a Dream.

II.

JESUS said to the Woman of Samaria, *Whosoever drinketh of this Water, shall thirst again*, John iv. 13. This may be applied to all worldly Satisfaction; the more we enjoy them, the more we want them. The Possession of Riches does but encrease our Thirst of them. Avarice and Ambition are more uneasy for what they have not, than pleased with what they have. The Enjoyment of Pleasure softens the Soul, depraves it, and makes it unsatiable. The

more we divert ourselves, the more we want Diversion; and it is easier to persevere in a State of Fervor and Penitence, than to recover it again when we have given Way to Pleasure and Relaxation. Let us therefore watch over ourselves, and abstain from those *Waters*, which will but encrease our Thirst. Let us keep our Heart with Care, that it be not seduced by the vain Joys of the World, which will end only in Despair.

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## D A Y XIX.

### *Of holy Tears.*

#### I.

**BLESSED** are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted, Matt. v. 4. What new kind of Tears are these? (saith St *Austin*) they make happy those who shed them. This Happiness consists in being afflicted for the Wickedness of the World; the many Dangers which surround us, and the inexhaustible Corruption of our own Hearts. It is a great Gift of God, to fear losing his Love; to fear, lest we should wander from the strait Way. The Saints shed Tears for

this.

this. It is difficult to rejoice while one is in danger of losing what one values most, and of losing one's self with it. It is impossible not to be afflicted, while one sees nothing but Vanity, Error, Offences, Forgetfulness, and Contempt of the God we love. Grief is due to so many sad Occasions of Sorrow : our Grief shall be pleasing in the Sight of God. He himself inspires it ; his Love causes our Tears to flow, and he shall himself wipe them from our Eyes.

II.

WE hear Jesus Christ say, *Wo unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep. Wo unto you that are rich, for ye have received your Consolation*, Luke vi. 24, 25. and yet Men seek Mirth and Riches. He also saith, *Blessed are they that weep* ; yet they fear nothing more than Sorrow. We should grieve here, not only for the Dangers of our own State, but for every Thing that is vain and criminal. We should weep for ourselves, and for others : all deserve our Tears. Happy the Tears which spring from Grace, which make us disrelish these transitory Things, and produce in us the Desire of the good Things of Eternity.

DAY

## DAY XX.

## Of Worldly Wisdom.

## I.

THE Wisdom of worldly-minded Men must needs be great, since our Lord assures us, that it is greater than that of the Children of God; yet with all its Pretensions and fair Appearances, it is fatal to those who follow it. This crooked and subtle Wisdom is most opposite to that of God, which is ever plain and simple; and what does it avail its Professors, seeing they are always taken in their own Devices? The Apostle St *James* saith of this kind of Wisdom, that it is *earthly*, *animal*, (or sensual) and *devilish*, James iii. 15. *Earthly*, because it confines its Care to the getting or possessing the Things of the Earth. *Animal* or sensual, because it seeks only to make Provision for gratifying the Passions or sensual Appetites; and *devilish*, because to the Subtilty and Penetration of a Demon, it joins also the Malice. Men so qualified, think to impose upon others, but in the Event they deceive only themselves.

BLIND



II.

BLIND therefore are all those, who think themselves wise without the Grace of Jesus Christ, which only can make us truly wise. They are like those, who in a Dream think themselves awake, and believe all the Objects they imagine, to be true and real: and while they are pursuing their vain Projects of Pleasure or Ambition (so great is the Infatuation that possesses them) they see not what lies in the Way before them, sometimes Disgrace, always Death, Judgment, and Eternity. These great Objects daily advance, and approach nearer to profane Men; yet they see them not. Their political Skill foresees every Thing, but the inevitable Fall and Annihilation of all they set their Hearts upon. O mad and infatuated, when will ye open your Eyes to the Light of Jesus Christ, which discovers the Emptiness of all Grandeur here below?

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D A Y XXI.

*Of Trust in God.*

I.

**I***T is better to trust in the Lord, than to put Confidence in Man, Psal. cxviii. 8. Men are*

are ever trusting to one another, to weak Friends, to unfaithful Servants; yet they fear to put their Trust and Confidence in God. They will rely upon the Hand-writing of some great Man, but they will have no Assurance in the Gospel. The World promises, and they believe: God protests, and they doubt whether they should believe or no. What a Disrespect to him! What a Mischief to themselves is this? Let us restore the true Order of Things, and regulate our Confidence by the Laws of a true Proportion. Let us perform what depends upon us with Moderation; and expect what depends upon God without any Restriction. Let us repress all Hastiness of Passion, and all Solicitude disguised under the Name of Zeal; so we shall establish ourselves in God, and become like Mount Zion, which can never be moved.

## II.

OUR Trust in God, with regard to our Salvation, should be still more raised and firm. *I can do all Things through Christ who strengthens me*, saith St Paul, upon this Account, *Phil. iv. 13*. When I thought I should be able to do every Thing, I was  
inca-

incapable of doing any Thing: now that I despair of myself, and have no Hope left, but in God, I begin to be able to do every Thing. A happy Weakness this, which makes me find in God, what is wanting in myself. I glory in my Infirmities, and the Misfortunes of my Life, because they serve to cure my Mistakes concerning the World and myself. I ought to think myself happy, that his merciful Afflictions have reduced me to Extremities; since therein I shall receive of his Strength, I shall be hid under his Wings, and environed with that special Protection which he extends to his devout Children, who have no Dependance but upon him.

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D A Y XXII.

*Of the Depth of GOD's Mercy.*

I.

**H**OW great is the *Loving-kindness of the Lord our God, and his Compassion unto such as turn unto him in Holiness!* Ecclus. xvii. 29. Why do we delay to cast ourselves into the Depth of this Abyss? The  
more

more we lose ourselves therein with Faith and Love, the safer shall we be. Let us give ourselves up to God without Reserve, or Apprehension of Danger. He will love us, and make us to love him; and that Love encreasing daily, shall produce in us all the other Virtues. He alone shall fill our Heart, which the World has agitated and intoxicated, but could never fill. He will take nothing from us, but what makes us unhappy. He will only make us despise the World, which perhaps we do already. He will alter little in our Actions, and only correct the Motive of them, by making them all be referred to himself. Then the most ordinary and seemingly indifferent Actions shall become Exercises of Virtue, Sources of Consolation. We shall chearfully behold Death approach, as the Beginning of Life immortal; and as *St Paul* speaks, *we shall not be unclothed, but clothed upon, and Mortality shall be swallowed up of Life*, 2 Cor. v. 4. And we shall then discover the Depth of God's Mercy, which he has exercised towards us.

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II.

CONSIDER, in the Presence of God, the Effects of that infinite Mercy which you have already experienced, the Lights which Christ has given you, the good Thoughts he has inspired you with, the Sins he has pardoned, the Dangers he has preserved you from, and the extraordinary Assistance he has afforded you. Endeavour to excite your Love towards him by these precious Marks of his Goodness. Add to these, the Remembrance of the Crosses he has dispensed for your Sanctification; for those also are the Riches of his Mercy, which you ought to consider as signal Testimonies of his Love. Let a Sense of past Favours inspire you with a Trust in him for future. Learn from these, that he has loved you too much, not to love you still. Distrust not him, but only yourself. Remember that, as his Apostle speaks, *He is the Father of Mercies, and God of all Consolation*, 2 Cor. i. 3. He sometimes separates these two: His *Consolations* are withdrawn, but his *Mercies* still continue. He takes away what is sweet and sensible in Grace, because you want to be humbled and punished for having

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ing sought Consolation elsewhere. Such Chastisement is still a new Depth of his Mercy.

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# D A Y XXIII.

*Of the Easiness of CHRIST's Yoke.*

## I.

**M***R Yoke is easy, and my Burden light,*  
 Matt. xi. 30. Let not the Name of Yoke deter us, for it is the Yoke of Christ, and he helps us to bear it; he makes us love it; he endears it to us by the inward Charms of Righteousness and Truth. He gives a Disgust for false Pleasure, and renders the Practice of Virtue delightful. He supports the Man against himself, frees him from original Corruption, and makes him strong notwithstanding his Weakness. What fearest thou, O Man of little Faith, let God exert himself in thee. Abandon thyself to him. You shall suffer, but you shall suffer with Love and inward Tranquillity. You shall fight, but you shall gain the Victory: The Lord himself shall fight for you, and reward your Success. You shall weep, but  
 your

your Tears shall be pleasing, and God shall himself wipe them from your Eyes. You will be restrained from following your Passions, but after a free Sacrifice of your Liberty, you will find another kind of Liberty, unknown to the World, and more valuable than universal Empire.

II.

WHAT Blindness is it to fear engaging too far with God! The more we love him, the more we shall love his Commandments. That Love will comfort us in Losses, sweeten our Crosses, set us free from all other dangerous Affections, make us see even through a Cloud of Afflictions the Mercy that dispenses them to us, and make us discover in Death itself eternal Glory and Bliss. What then are we afraid of? Can we have too much of God? Is it a Misfortune to be freed from the heavy Yoke of the World, and to bear the light Burden of Jesus Christ? Do we fear to be too happy, too much delivered from ourselves, from the Caprices of our Pride, the Violence of our Passions, and the Tyranny of this deceitful World?

DAY

## D A Y XXIV.

*Of false Liberty.*

## I.

*WHERE the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty, 2 Cor. iii. 17.* The Love of Liberty is one of the most dangerous Passions of the Heart of Man, and it happens with this, as with the rest of the Passions, it deceives those who follow it; and instead of true Liberty, it reduces them to the hardest and most infamous Servitude, for what else can we call the Life of worldly Men? What do they endure to obtain and preserve the good Opinion of those whom at the same Time they despise? What Trouble have they to stifle those Passions, which they would control, and gratify those which they would indulge, to hide their inward Vexations, and save Appearances? Is this the Liberty we are so fond of, and which we are so unwilling to sacrifice to God? Where is this Liberty to be found? I see nothing but Constraint, but base and unworthy Subjection, but a wretched Necessity of disguising ourselves, we refuse  
our-



ourselves to God, who desires us only to save us ; and we give ourselves up to the World, which can only enslave and ruin us.

## II.

IT is thought, the Men of the World do nothing, but what pleases them, because they have a Relish for the Passions they indulge ; but those who think thus, do not consider the Irksomeness, the Loathings, and Disappointments, inseparable from a Pursuit of Pleasure ; and the many Contradictions and Mortifications which attend the greatest Preferments. The outside appears pleasing, but within is Vexation and Disquiet. Men think Freedom consists in depending on no Body but one's self ; this is an extravagant Mistake ; there is no such State, there is no Condition, wherein a Man does not depend on many others, wherein he is not more obliged to follow their Fancies than his own ? All the Commerce of Life is a perpetual Confinement by the Laws of good Breeding, and the Necessity of humouring others ; and besides, our own Passions are the worst of Tyrants : if you obey them but by halves, it is a perpetual Strife and Contest within ; and if you quite give yourself

yourself up to them, it is horrid to think to what Extremities they will lead. May God preserve us from that fatal Slavery, which the mad Presumption of Man calls Liberty! Liberty is to be found only in him, *his Truth shall set us free*; and make us experience, that to serve him is to reign.

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# D A Y XXV.

*Of the perfect Devoting ourselves to GOD.*

## I.

**L**ORD, *what wouldst thou have me to do?* It was St Paul's Inquiry when he was struck to the Earth by Miracle, and converted by the Grace of that Jesus whom he had persecuted. Alas! how often have we also persecuted him by our Infidelities, our Humours, and our Passions, which have withstood the Work of his Mercy in our Hearts? At last he has struck us down by Tribulation; he has crushed our Pride; he has confounded our worldly Wisdom; and put Self-Love in a Consternation. Let us now therefore say to him with a perfect Resignation, *Lord, what wouldst thou have*

*me to do?* Hitherto my return to thee has been very defective. I have used many Evasions, and endeavoured to save all I could from the total Sacrifice which I ought to make to thee. But I am now better disposed, and desire that thou mayest become the absolute Master of my Life and Actions.

II.

NOR is it sufficient, that the Oblation we make to God be universal; it is of no Service while it continues loose and uncertain, without descending to Particulars, and being ratified by Practice. Good Purposes cost nothing, and are worth nothing, if we do not put them in Execution. We must desire our Perfection with greater Earnestness, than we ever sought a temporal Good, and not do less for God, than we have already done for the World. Let us search our Hearts: Am I determined to sacrifice to God my strictest Friendships, my most confirmed Habits, my most prevalent Inclinations, and most agreeable Diversions.



## D A Y XXVI.

*Of the Terms Men would make with God.*

## I.

**H**OW long will ye halt between two Opinions? 1 Kings xviii. 21. No Man can serve two Masters, Matt. vi. 24. Men know, if they would be saved, they must love and serve God: but they would fain separate from that Love and that Service, whatever is burdensome; and leave only what they like. They would serve him upon the Terms of giving him only Words and Ceremonies, and of those Ceremonies, only such as are not too long and tedious. They would love him upon the Terms of loving with him, and perhaps above him, Things which he has forbidden and condemned. They would love him upon the Terms of diminishing nothing in that blind Self-Love, whereby instead of referring themselves to God, by whom, and for whom they exist, they, on the contrary, refer God to themselves, and betake themselves to him only as a Source of Comfort, when the Creatures fail them. They would serve him and love him upon the Terms of being some-



sometimes ashamed of him, and not venturing to give him any more than the World shall allow and approve of. What kind of Love and Service is this?

II.

GOD will admit no other Terms with us, but those which we covenanted in our Baptism, wherein we promised to renounce the World for his Sake. His first and great Commandment requires that we should love him unreservedly with our whole Heart, and Mind, and Strength. Can he be said truly to love God, who pays a great Deference to the World his Adversary, against which he has denounced so many Judgments? Can he be said to love God, who is afraid of knowing him too much, lest he should be too far engag'd in his Service? Can he be said to love God, who satisfies himself with not affronting him, and takes no Pains to please him, nor is zealous for an Opportunity to serve him? God sets no Limits to his Love towards us, and therefore our Returns to Him should be of the same Nature.

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## D A Y XXVII.

*Of spending our Time well.*

## I.

**L**ET us do good while we have Time,  
 Gal. vi. 10. *The Night cometh, in  
 which no Man can work,* John ix. 4. Time  
 is precious, but Men know not its true  
 Value; nor will they learn it, till it is too  
 late. Our Friends ask it of us, and we  
 bestow it as if it were nothing worth: nay,  
 sometimes it is a Burden we want to get  
 rid of; yet the Day will come, when we  
 shall think one Quarter of an Hour more  
 valuable than all the Treasures of the  
 Earth. God, most liberal and bounteous,  
 of all other Things, teaches us, by the  
 frugal Dispensation of his Providence, how  
 careful we ought to be to make a good  
 Use of Time, because he never gives two  
 Moments together, nor grants us a *second*,  
 till he has withdrawn the *first*, still keeping  
 the *third* in his own Hand, so that we are  
 in a perfect Uncertainty whether we shall  
 have it or no. Time is given us to pre-  
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pare for Eternity, and Eternity will not be too long to regret our lost Time, if we have made an ill Use of it.

II.

ALL our Life, as well as all our Heart, is due to God: they are neither of them too much for him. He gave them only, that we might love and serve him. Let us therefore rob him of nothing. We cannot every Moment do great Matters for him, but we may always do what is proper for our Condition. To be silent, to suffer, to pray, when there is no Room for outward Action, is an acceptable Offering to God. A Disappointment, a Contradiction, an Injury received and endured for God's Sake, is of as much Value as a long Prayer; and the Time is not lost, which is spent in the Practice of Meekness and Patience. But for this we must be cautious that those Interruptions do not happen by our own Fault. Thus we should regulate our Life, and *redeem the Time*, as St Paul speaks, flying from the World, its vain Amusements, useless Correspondencies, and unprofitable Conversations,

which serve only to dissipate our Minds, and indulge our Self-Love. By these Means we shall find Time for the Service of God ; all that is spent otherwise, is lost.

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## D A Y XXVIII.

### *Of the Presence of GOD.*

#### I.

*WALK before me, and be thou perfect,*  
 Gen. xvii. 1. They are the Words of God to *Abraham*, instructing us, that to live in the Presence of God is the Way to Perfection. We never depart from that Way, but by losing Sight of God, and forgetting our Dependance upon him. God is the Light by which we see, and the End at which we should aim. In all the Business and Events of Life, we should Consider only the Order of his Providence, and we shall maintain a sufficient Sense of his Presence in the midst of our Business, as long as we have no other Intention in performing it, but purely that of obeying him.



II.

*I WILL lift up mine Eyes to the Hills, from whence cometh my Help, Psal. cxxi. 1. Looking only to our Feet, will not be sufficient to deliver us from the many Snares that surround us; the Danger indeed is below, but the Deliverance can come only from above; thither must we lift up our Eyes to him, from whom our Help cometh. Our Enemies encompass us incessantly; nor are we in less Danger from within, by Reason of our Infirmary: We have no hope but in Jesus Christ, who has overcome the World for himself and for us: His Omnipotence will support our Infirmities.*



D A Y XXIX.

*Of the Love we ought to have for God.*

I.

*WHOM have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth, that I desire besides thee, Psal. lxxiii. 25. When we say to God, that we love him with all*

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our Heart, it is often a mere Form of Words, without Truth or Meaning. Men learn it when they are young, and they continue to use it when they are grown up, without thinking of what they say. To love God, is to have no other Will but his; to keep faithfully his Law, and have in Abhorrence all Violation of it. To love God, is to love what Christ lov'd, Poverty, Humiliations, and Sufferings; it is also to hate what he hated, the World, and its Vanities: Can we be said to love an Object which we do not desire to resemble? To love God, is to desire to converse with him, to wish to go to him, to sigh and languish after him. That is but a feigned Love, which does not desire to see the Beloved.

## II.

OUR Lord *came to bring Fire upon the Earth*, Luke xii. 49. and desired that Fire might overspread it. Yet Men live in a deadly Coldness and Indifference. They love Money, Buildings, Titles, and a Chimera they call Reputation; they love even the meanest and most contemptible Things; but divine Love rarely finds a Place in their

their Heartr. Do thou, O Lord, vindicate thy Right in us, and Reign over us, notwithstanding our Infidelities: Let the Fire of thy Love extinguish all other Fires. What can we see lovely out of thee, which is not to be found in its full Perfection in thee, O thou Fountain of all Good! Grant us but the Grace to love thee, and we shall then love thee only, thee eternally.

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D A Y XXX.

*Sentiments of Divine Love.*

I.

**O** GOD of my Heart, and my Portion for ever, Psal. lxxii. 26. Can we know Thee, and not love Thee, Thee who surpassest all that created Natures can comprehend, in Beauty, in Greatness, in Power, in Goodness, in Liberality, in Magnificence, in every kind of Perfection, and (which most nearly affects me) in Love for me? It should seem, that an awful Reverence, and the Distance there is between us, should stop me: but thou permittest

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me, *that is too little to say*, thou commandest me to love thee. After this, Lord, I cannot contain myself, I am quite transported. O sacred Love, who hast wounded my Heart, come to cure it, or rather, to make the Wound more deep and sensible. Withdraw me from all the Creatures, they are grievous to me, thou alone sufficest me; I desire nothing but thee.

## II.

WHAT, shall it be said, that vain Lovers here below carry their extravagant Passions to an Excess of Delicacy; and art thou to be lov'd but feebly, and with Limitation? No, my God, profane Love ought not to excel the Divine. Shew what thou canst do in a Heart wholly devoted to thee. Thou hast full Access to it, thou knowest all its Springs, and what thy Grace is capable of exciting in it. Thou expectest only my Consent, and the Surrender of my free Will. I give thee both a thousand and a thousand Times. Accept them, O Lord, exert in them thy divine Power: Fire me, consume me. Poor and feeble Creature as I am, I have nothing to give thee, but my Love. Do  
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thou increase it, O Lord, and make it worthy of thee. O that I were capable of doing great Things for thy Sake! O that I had some great Sacrifice to make to thee! But all that I can do is nothing. To sigh, to languish, to love, to die, that I might love more, is all I henceforth desire.



## On the Words,

*Lord, teach us to Pray, Luke xi. 1.*

O Lord, I know not what I should ask of thee. Thou only knowest what I want: and thou lovest me better than I can love myself. O Lord, give to me thy Child what is proper, whatever it may be. I dare not ask either Crosses or Comforts. I only present myself before thee: I open my Heart to thee. Behold my Wants, which I am ignorant of: but do thou behold, and do according to thy Mercy. Smite, or heal; depress me, or raise me up: I adore all thy Purposes, without knowing them: I am silent, I offer myself in Sacrifice. I abandon myself to thee.

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thee. No more any Desire, but to accomplish thy Will. Teach me to Pray. Pray thou thyself in me.

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*Of the good Use of Crosses.*

**W**E find it difficult to convince ourselves of the Goodness of God in afflicting those he loves. Why, it may be said, should he take Pleasure in our Sufferings? Cannot he render us Good without afflicting us? Yes, certainly, God could do it; for nothing is impossible to him. He has an absolute Power over the Heart of Man, and moves all the Springs of it at Pleasure. But tho' he can save us without Sufferings, yet he will not; in the same Manner as he will not produce us in the State of perfect Manhood, but causes us to pass gradually through the Troubles and Weaknesses of Childhood and Youth. In these Cases he is absolute Master, and we have nothing to do but to submit, and silently adore his profound Wisdom, without comprehending the Reasons by which he acts. What we may discern

discern plainly is, that we cannot become good, but in the Measure we become humble, disinterested, and free from Self-love, so as to ascribe all to God, without arrogating any Thing to ourselves.

Now the Operation of Grace, which destroys Self-love, cannot (without a Miracle) but prove painful. God, in the Order of Grace, as well as that of Nature, rarely works Miracles. It would be as great a Miracle of Grace, to see a Person full of Self-love become in a Moment quite disinterested, as to see an Infant start at once into the Perfection of Manhood. God works in Nature and in Grace, but in both he conceals his Operations under an insensible Series of Events. By this Means he keeps us in the Obscurity of Faith. He not only does his Work by little and little, but he also does it by such ways as are most simple and most proper : So that the Means appearing so suitable, human Wisdom may ascribe the Success to them, and the Finger of God may be concealed under the Veil of natural Causes. Without this, all that God does, would be a perpetual and notorious Miracle ; which would quite exclude, and make impossible that State of Faith,

Faith, which he has appointed for the present Life.

This State of Faith serves not only to exercise the Good, (making them sacrifice their Reason in a Life full of Obscurity) but also to blind the Bad, who merit such Blindness by their Presumption. These last see only what is natural in the Works of God ; nor can they attain any right Understanding of them, for want of that Humility, which is indispensably requisite for the Knowledge of divine Things.

'Tis therefore for concealing the Operations of Grace in the Obscurity of Faith, that God renders them so slow and painful. He weans us from the Love of the World, by the Inconstancy and Baseness of Men, and the frequent Disappointments that attend the most prosperous Condition : He weans us from the Love of ourselves, by a sad Experience of our Depravity and Corruption, in numberless Relapses into Sin. By such a Series of Events, which all appear natural, he makes us die to Sin leisurely and by Degrees. We would gladly be consumed all at once, to escape the lingering



gering Sufferings of a long and tedious Mortification ; and we desire immediate Perfection only from an Excess of Self-love. 'Tis, I say, Self-love which makes us murmur at the Length of our Sufferings, and that is the very Thing which God would destroy, for while it lasts, his Works cannot be perfected.

Why then should we complain? Our Disease is the Love of the World, and ourselves. God prepares a Train of Events, which by little and little mortify our Love of the World, and at last wean us from Self-love. The Operation indeed is painful, but our Depravity makes it necessary. The *Whole need no Physician*, but the diseas'd Part must suffer the Surgeon's Incision : He cuts only that he may come at the Bottom of the Sore : If he puts us to great Pain, 'tis only because our Malady is great: We suffer not from his Cruelty, but his Care and Skill ; for he would treat his own Son in the same Manner.

'Tis thus God treats us. He never puts us in Pain, but unwillingly. He loves us with the Tenderneſs of a Father, and can take no Pleasure in our Misery : but he cuts  
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to the Quick to cure the Ulcer of our Heart. His Goodness obliges him to deprive us of what we love too much, what we love inordinately, and in such Manner, as to hinder our loving. And when God thus treats us, we grieve like Children who are deprived of something which they were pleasing themselves with, and with which they would have hurt themselves : they cry and take on with Passion, against those who have sav'd them from Harm. So we are apt in our Folly to murmur against God ; but he saves us in our own Despite, and by correcting, he amends us. When his Hand lies heaviest upon us, 'tis only to hinder the Evil we would do ourselves. The Things, whose Loss we lament, would have made us lament eternally if we had not lost them. And God takes away what we doat upon, that he may have our whole Heart to himself, and in due Time fill it with greater Felicity than our fondest Wishes could invent.

Nothing happens in the World but by the Will of God. He made, and he governs all Things. He numbers the Hairs of our Head, the Leaves of each Tree,  
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the Sands of the Sea Shore, and all the Drops which fill the Ocean. His Wisdom has measur'd and weigh'd every Atom of the Universe. He each Moment produces and renews the Breath of Life which animates us. He has number'd all our Days, and holds in his Hands the Keys of the Grave, to shut or open it.

What seems of great Moment to us, is as nothing in the Sight of God. The Difference of a little longer, or a little shorter Life, disappears in the Presence of his Eternity. What matters it, whether this frail Vessel, this Body of Clay, be broke and reduced to Dust a little sooner, or a little later?

How short and fallacious are our Views of Things? We are in a Consternation to see a Friend die in the Flower of his Age. What a lamentable Loss, we cry! But to whom is this Loss? What does the dying Man lose? Some Years of Vanity, Delusion, and Danger of eternal Death. God delivers him from the midst of Iniquity, from the Corruption of the World, and from his own Frailty. And what do his Friends lose? They lose the Poison of worldly

worldly Felicity, they lose a perpetual Intoxication, the Forgetfulness of God and themselves in which they were plung'd: or to speak truly and properly, they gain by this Affliction the Benefit of being set free from these Evils.

How apparent therefore is the Goodness of God! how tender and merciful is he with Regard to our real Evils, at the very Time when we are most afflicted, and most tempted to complain of his Severity!

What Difference find we *now*, between two Persons who liv'd an hundred Years ago? The one (suppose) died twenty Years before the other, but in fine they both died. Their Separation, which at that Time seem'd so long and so grievous, does not appear so now to us, and was in Reality but a short Separation. What was parted, soon became united again, and no Trace was left of the Division that was made. Life passes on like a swift Current. The Past Time appears as a Dream. The Present escapes us every Moment. The Future will prove like the Present, it will soon become Past in the continual Flux of Time. Days, Months, and Years, press one another



ther forward, like the Waves of a Torrent. Yet a few Moments, yet (I say) a little while, and all will be finished. Alas ! that which now appears long and tedious to us, because it is mournful ; will seem short when it is over.

'Tis the Weakness of Self-love, that makes us think our Misfortunes so tedious. The sick Man, who rests ill, thinks the Night of an immeasurable Length, yet that Night is as short as others. Our Cowardice exaggerates our Afflictions : they seem much greater than they are through our Want of Fortitude. The only way to make them lighter, is a courageous Resignation. We shall indeed still suffer, but God will thereby purify us, and make us fit for himself. Shall we choose to pass our whole Life, even till the dreadful Moment of Death, in voluptuous Ease, in Splendor, in vain Joy, in the Triumphs of Pride, in the savory Enjoyment of the World, (that declared Enemy of Jesus Christ) and in an Aversion to Sufferings, which alone can satisfy us ? The World will cast us off, will ungratefully forget us, will despise us, will persecute us : 'tis very well : nor should  
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we wonder that the World acts like itself, always unjustly, deceitfully, and perfidiously. Yet this is that World, which we have been fond of, which we perhaps still desire to love. God forces us away from this hateful World, to free us from its detested Slavery, and make us enter into the Liberty of his Children: and for this we are in Distress! We must needs be very much our own Enemies, to be so uneasy at the World's neglecting us. What! cannot we bear a Thing so beneficial to us, and do we regret the Want of what is so mischievous? Such is the Source of our Tears and our Grief.

O God, who see'st the Depth of our Misery, thou alone canst heal us. Give us quickly, O Lord, that Faith, Hope, Love, and Christian Fortitude, which we stand in so much need of. Make us turn our Eyes incessantly unto thee, O Almighty Father, (who givest nothing to thy dear Children, but to promote their Salvation) and to Jesus thy Son, who is our Pattern in suffering. Thou didst fasten him to the Cross for us. Thou madest him *a Man of Sorrows*, to teach us how useful Sorrows are. Let coward

*Of excessive Sensibility in Sufferings. 163*

ard Nature then be silent, in the Contemplation of Jesus filled with Reproaches, and crush'd with Sufferings. Give me, O Lord, a Heart according to thine own, a Heart that may be hardened against itself, that may fear nothing but to displease thee, or may at least fear eternal Pains, and not those which prepare us for thy Kingdom. Thou seest, O Lord, the Weakness and Distress of thy poor Creature : He is helpless, and can find no Support in himself. So much the better provided, that thou wilt not fail him, and that he continues to seek from thee, with an humble Confidence, what he despairs to find in his own Heart.



*Of excessive Sensibility in Sufferings.*

*BY Sensibility, is here meant a quick and painful Sense of Affliction, which often raises Scruples in pious Souls, when they apprehend that they bear not their Cross in Patience, because they are so apt to be distress'd and grieve under it.*

This Sensibility does not depend upon us, it is not in our Power ; but is what God  
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has plac'd in our Temper or Constitution, on Purpose to exercise us. He will not free us from it; but, on the contrary, employs it for our Sanctification. We must therefore enter into his Designs: for Temptations are necessary, and all our Care should be only not to be overcome by them. This Sensibility is a Source of inward Temptations, which as well as the outward ones, are Matter of our spiritual Warfare, and should be Occasions for us to obtain the Victory. These inward Temptations are so much the more useful, inasmuch as they tend more directly to humble us by the Experience of our inward Corruption. The outward ones only shew us the Malignity of the World about us, but these make us feel our own Depravity.

Let us bear therefore, with an humble Faith and Tranquillity, our inward Repugnances, and all the Temptations that spring from ourselves, as well as the Storms which beat upon us from without. Both come equally from God, who mortifies us by our own Temper, as well as by the Humors of other Men.

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This Anguish of Mind often springs from our *Pride*, which suffers much, and is discouraged to meet such obstinate Resistance from within, while it hoped to have the Passions subdued, that it might glory in their Subjection, and take Complacence in its own Perfections.

Let us faithfully endeavour to keep our Wills submissive, notwithstanding the Struggles, and the Repugnances of Nature: And let us commit ourselves to God, to deal with us as he pleases, when he shews by these Tempests of Mind, what Wrecks we are expos'd to, if his powerful Hand did not preserve us.

But if it happens that we fall wilfully, let us then deeply humble ourselves before God, and not delay our Return to him for a Moment. Let us rise again, I say, immediately, and proceed in our former Course, without being disquieted or discouraged by our *Fall*.

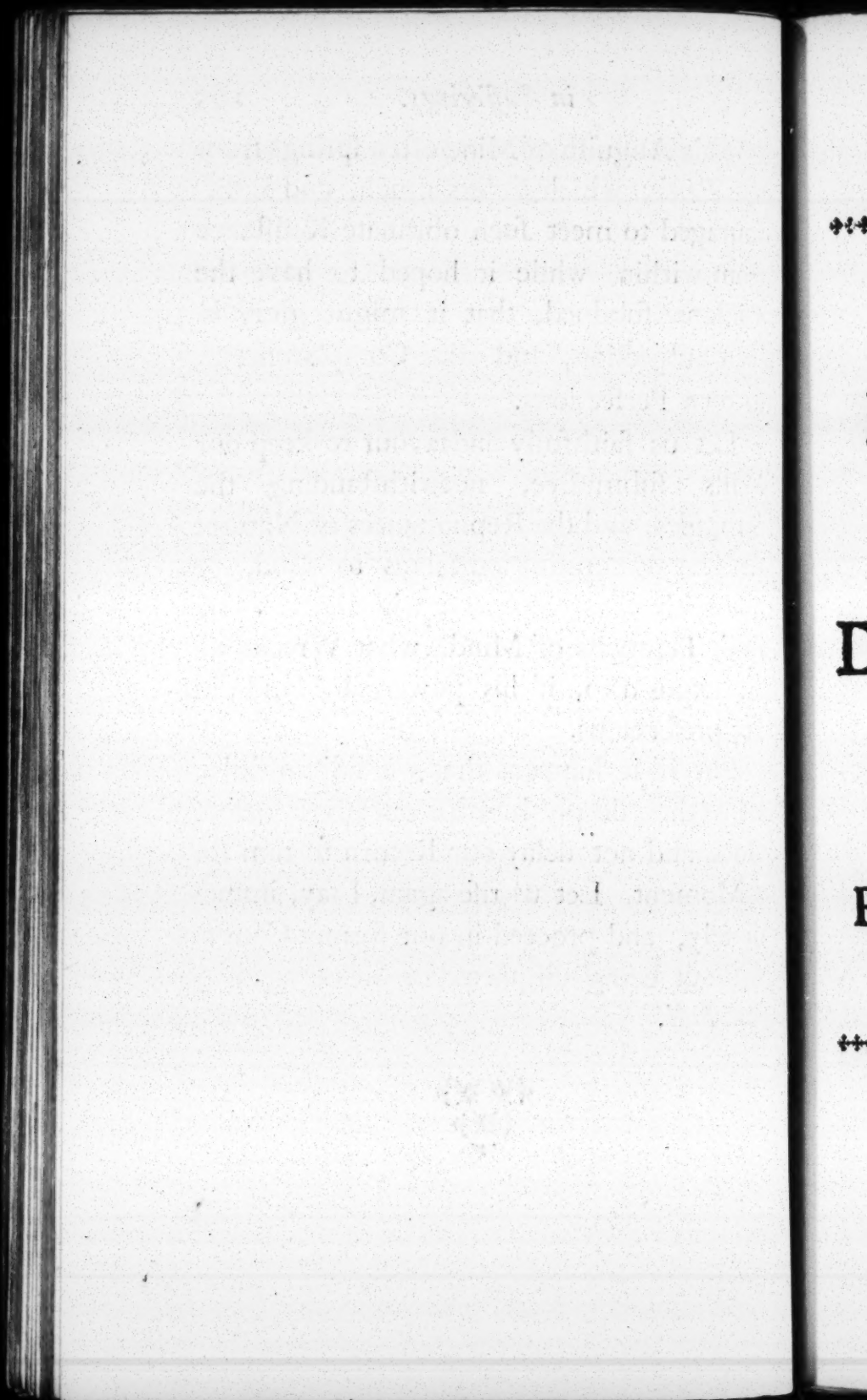


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**A**  
**Mother's Advice**  
**TO HER**  
**DAUGHTER**  
**CONCERNING**  
**RELIGION.**









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Mother's Advice

TO HER

DAUGHTER

CONCERNING

RELIGION.





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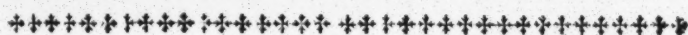


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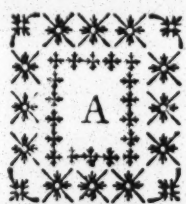


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## Mother's Advice, &c.



### S E C T. I.


 S you are now, Dear Daughter,  
 of an Age capable to be in-  
 structed in the Obligations of  
 Christianity, I have thought it  
 my Duty no longer to delay the giving you  
 some little Directions, which will make  
 your Life happy, as well as religious, if  
 you follow them.

There are, Dear Child, many kinds of  
 Devotion, which are both burdensome and  
 unprofitable too. As the Heathen had  
 each an Idol according to his own Fancy,  
 so now-a-days Men devise a Sort of Reli-  
 gion, each to his own Humour. Some  
 make Religion consist in repeating or read-  
 ing so many Prayers, Psalms, Chapters,

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*Ec.* and provided they omit nothing of the Task they have prescrib'd themselves, they think they have done their Duty, and that God must be satisfied with the Tribute of their Lips, tho' the World has full Possession of their Hearts. The Piety of others is to be always Abroad, about what they call Works of Charity; and of others, to pass great Part of their Lives at Church, neglecting their Families, which God has committed to their Care; to be busied in Matters, which, tho' good in themselves, are not so for them, but in such Degree only, as they are perfectly consistent with the principal Duties incumbent on them, in that State of Life wherein God hath placed them.

I hope that you will be secure from all these Errors, if you follow faithfully what our Lord enables me to say to you. And I trust in his Goodness, that your Fidelity herein will be the Means of obtaining for you such Grace, as may confirm and establish you in his Love.

You are then, my Daughter, a Christian, *i. e.* a Child of God, Rom. viii. 17. and consequently an Heir of God, and joint-  
Heir



*Heir with Jesus Christ*, called to enjoy God, to be his *Temple*, and for this End you were Consecrated to him in Baptism. Saith not St Paul to Christians, *that they are the Temples of the living God?* 2 Cor. xvi. 16. *God will dwell in you, and that by Faith*: (saith the same Apostle, *Eph. iii. 17.*) This then is what you are *called to*.

But it is not enough that you know your Calling, unless you are instructed also in the Means to fulfil it.

As you consist of Soul and Body, both must be regulated. I begin with the nobler Part.

I have told you, my Child, that you are the *Temple of God*; if so be that *God dwell in you by Faith*. The Question is, how to procure this great Advantage? Hear the Oracle of Truth. *If any one, saith Christ, KEEPETH MY COMMANDMENTS, my Father will love him: we will come to him, and make our Abode with him*, John xiv. 21, 23. That God therefore may dwell in you, you must *Keep his Commandments*. But (say you) how shall I do the Will of God, if I know it not? 'tis easy to know it, if you desire to perform it. God himself will teach

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you.

you. His Will is, that he may reign in you; and how can he reign there, if he does not dwell there?

Be very careful therefore not to profane his Temple. Do not force him to withdraw himself, by committing any wilful Sin; and if such a Misfortune should happen, delay not one Moment to return to him, and to invite him in the Bitterness of your Soul, to enter again into his Habitation. If you let him be long absent, it is much to be fear'd, he may not return; there is indeed no Danger on his Part, for he always desires to return into the Heart of Man; but Man, when gone astray, and at a Distance from God, hardens his Heart, and that more and more, the longer he is absent. Let not a vain Fear (which ignorant Persons call Humility) hinder your returning to God, as soon as you are fallen from him. This is of the last Consequence, and without it 'tis not possible to lead a Christian Life.

But as it is far better not to commit Offences, than to repent of them: I must give you a Preservative to secure you from them.

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The Rule which God gave to *Abraham* was, *Walk before me*, (or in my Presence) *and be thou perfect*, Gen. xvii. 5. And *David* saith, *Psal. xvi. 9. I have set God always before me — therefore I shall not fall.* You see then that to do the Will of God, is, *to Walk in his Presence* : This is indispensably necessary.

We may easily walk in the Presence of God, when we pray to him, as *dwelling* in us. The Reason why so few Christians walk in his Presence, is, because they know not that he dwelleth in them ; but for you, who can't be ignorant of it, it is needful only to shew what use you should make of this Divine Presence.

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## S E C T. II.

**T**HERE are two Ways of maintaining a Sense of this divine Presence. The first, is Prayer. The second, doing the Will of *God* in your daily Business.

As for your Prayer, you see plainly, that you must address yourself inwardly to him, who dwells within you, and that it would

be a useleſs Trouble to ſeek *him*, as aſar off, whom you have ſo near you. It may be a Satisfaction to you to hear what St *Auguſtin* ſaith upon this Subject. He thus laments his having ſought God out of himſelf: (*Confeff. Book X. Chap. vi. and xxvii.*)  
“ I ſought Thee, O my God, (ſaith he)  
“ in Heaven, in Earth, and in the Crea-  
“ tures, and I found Thee not there :  
“ I ſought Thee aſar off, and Thou wert  
“ very near. As ſoon as I ſought Thee  
“ in my Heart, I found Thee there.” ’Tis there then you muſt ſeek God, and there you will find him.

After the *Place* where you are to addreſs your Prayers to him, the next Thing you are to learn is the *Manner*, how you are to pray.

There is vocal Prayer, and the Prayer of the Heart. But as the vocal Prayer has all its value from that of the Heart, I ſhall ſpeak only of this latter.

You have been told, that you muſt addreſs your Prayers to God dwelling in your Heart, and that you muſt by a lively Act of Faith be convinced, that God is  
there



there present, and that he will *bear you from his holy Temple*. Such lively Faith will beget in you great Reverence and Trust in God. The Grandeur of his Majesty will attract your Reverence; and the Excess of his Goodness, who vouchsafes to abase himself even to you, and to become your Father, will produce a Love and Resignation so much the greater, as you are more sensible how little you deserve such Favour.

Pray then with Faith, Confidence, and Love, and ever from the Heart. Let Love more than Books instruct your Devotion. Ask what you want, with Confidence in his Goodness: Think often what Christ has suffered for you; but above all, beseech him to be your Master, and to teach you himself to pray. Say often to him, " Lord, I am but a Child, " I know not what to say." Receive with a full Conviction what St Paul affirms, *Rom. viii. 26. We know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh Intercession for us, with Groanings which cannot be uttered.* Beseech then that Holy Spirit to ask for

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you

you the Power to do what he requires of you.

I would have you for some Time to make use of the following Method.

On SUNDAY. Consider God as your *Master*, and keep close to him as a little Scholar, who desires only to be instructed; saying to him, with great Recollection, and from the Bottom of your Heart, *Teach me, O my divine Master, to do thy Will, and to please thee*: and then, continuing in Silence, as to hear him, say with *Samuel*, *Speak, Lord, for thy Servant beareth*. And with *David*, *Teach me thy Statutes. I will bear what the Lord God will speak*. P<sup>sal</sup>. lxxxv. 8.

Think then that he saith to you, as in P<sup>sal</sup>. xlv. 11, 12. *Hearken, O Daughter, and consider, incline thine Ear; forget also thine own People, and thy Father's House, i.e. the World: So shall the King have Pleasure in thy Beauty, for he is the Lord thy God, and worship thou him*. All this should be done in great Tranquillity and Recollection.

On

On MONDAY. Consider God as a *King*, and beseech him, that *His Kingdom may come*, and that he may reign within you. Present your Heart to him, that he may take Possession of it ; and make himself obey'd there with an absolute Authority. Say unto him, "*O my God, subdue this rebellious Heart to a perfect Subjection.*" He saith to you, *Behold thy King cometh full of Meekness*, Matt. xxi. 5. Bid your Heart then *Open, that the King of Glory may come in*. After which, make a thorough Resignation of yourself to this divine *King* : Continue in his Presence with Reverence, ready to receive his Orders, as he shall please to give them.

On TUESDAY. Behold him as your *Father*, and be filled with grateful Acknowledgments of his Goodness in taking you for his Child. For if this Quality of Father engages him to enrich you with his Graces, and make you Inheritor of his Kingdom ; it obliges you at the same Time to love him above all Things, and to endeavour to please him in all you do. And this should engage you to speak to him often with

Freedom and Confidence in his Goodness. A Child is familiar with his Father, who is pleased with the Expressions of its Love, excuses its Weaknesses, and easily forgives them. *O thou best of Fathers, keep me as a little Child.* So you should say to him: Then continue in Peace, recollected in the Arms of your Father, without any other Care, than to look on him and caress him.

Say to him often, *My Father! My Father!* *Ye have received, saith St Paul, the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father: the Spirit itself bearing witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God,* Rom. viii. 15, 16. And again, *Because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, crying Abba, Father,* Gal. iv. 6. This Word *Crying*, well expresses a Child's Manner of speaking to a Father, whom he loves: Love makes him rather *Cry*, than say, *My Father! My Father!* And as a little Child, who in its Fondness cries only *Father*, insinuates a thousand nameless Things to a Father's Heart: so when by the Spirit of Adoption,

we

we cry only this Word, God hears and accepts our Addresses to him. The Term *Crying*, shews plainly that God is not satisfied with an unmeaning lifeless Word, which the Tongue pronounces out of Custom, but in which the Heart has no Share: It must be a Cry from the Bottom of the Heart, to recognize so gracious a Father. This *Spirit of Love and Gratitude is that very Spirit, which bears witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God.* Love therefore, O love with Passion, so good a Father, and never forfeit the Quality of a Child.

On the WEDNESDAY. Present yourself to *Jesus Christ*, as one Sick, and all over wounded by Sin. Behold him as a charitable and affectionate *Physician*, who comes to cure you, nay more, to take your Diseases upon himself: *The Chastisement of our Peace is upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed.* Fear not then to draw near to him, however full of Sores you may be; and say to him with the Leper, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean:* then continue in Silence, exposed before him,



as an Object of his Compassion. The diseased Wretch, who, with few Words only shews his Maladies, moves Pity much more, than he who exaggerates them with an affected Eloquence. 'Tis sufficient to dwell upon such a Thought as this. "*Heal me, O Lord, lest my Wounds be corrupted: Speak but one Word, and thy Servant shall be whole.*"

On the THURSDAY. Be like a little Sheep at the Side of its *Shepherd*, and ask of him, with an humble Assurance, Food for your Soul. He calls himself our *Shepherd*, and saith, that *His Sheep bear his Voice*, John x. 27. To hear his Voice, is the distinguishing Character of his Sheep; by this we know that he is indeed our Shepherd, *if we bear his Voice*: and how can we hear, if we do not hearken to him? *My Sheep*, saith he, *know me, and I know them, and they follow me*. David (himself, the Shepherd of Israel) was as a Sheep in this Flock: *Thy Rod*, saith he, *and thy Staff comfort me*, Psal. xxiii. The little Sheep then must be faithful, not to stray from its Shepherd, but go where he leads. *He will feed them*, as he saith,

saith, *in a good Pasture*, Ezek. xxxiv. 14. and that Pasture is himself, *John* vi. His divine Nature, which he communicates for their Growth in all Virtue. *David* saith, *that his Rod and his Staff comforteth him*. How must we understand this, seeing the Rod is for the Correction of the Sheep? The meaning is, that when the Sheep sometimes wander from the Shepherd to feed elsewhere, he brings them back by Afflictions into the Pasture, which he has prepared for them. “Thou, O Lord, art my Shepherd, what should I fear? If I wander, thou bringest me back; if I am weak, thou supportest me.” Keep then close, my dear Child, to this divine Shepherd, and never stray from him.

On the FRIDAY. Behold him as your Saviour and Redeemer, who redeems you from the Slavery in which you had wilfully engaged yourself. Say with *David*, *Bless the Lord, O my Soul, who forgiveth all thine Iniquities, who healeth all thy Diseases; who redeemeth thy Life from Destruction*, Psal. ciii. 2. But with what a Price hath he redeemed you? Even with all his Blood, his Life,  
in

in a Word, with his whole Self. He became a Slave to make you free ; and he asks nothing more of you, but your hearty Consent to be delivered from your Captivity. There is no Deliverance for you, but by him ; and you will be your own Enemy, if you hinder him. He saith himself, *If the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed*, John viii. 36. You belong to him by the Title of Acquisition, you are his Dominion, and his Inheritance, *Jer. x. 16*.

As his Blood is the Price of your Redemption, beseech him to wash you in it. Keep yourself close to him, as it were to receive the Blood that flows from his Wounds. Say to him, *Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me*, Isa. xxxviii. 14. Then, after acknowledging his Goodness with the tenderest Sentiments of Love and Gratitude, keep yourself in Silence by him, while he pleads for you by all the Merits of his Sufferings.

On the SATURDAY. Present yourself to Jesus as his *Spouse* : But is not this presumptuous ? No, he has espoused human Nature, and therein you. He desires to join you to himself in the strictest Union, according

ing to that Prayer he made to his Father,  
*That they may be one, even as we are one*, John  
 xvii. 11. Make no doubt (my dear Child)  
 but that you are called to that supream Hap-  
 piness. Our Lord invites you, saying, "*My*  
 "*Sister, my Love, open your Heart entirely*  
 "*to me, Cant. v. 2. I want only this, that*  
 "*I may give myself entirely to thee, for*  
 "*My Delights are to be with the Children of*  
 "*Men*, Prov. viii. 31. I am the Lover  
 " of Souls, and have forsaken the Bosom of  
 " my Father to espouse them. I have em-  
 " braced Pain and Grief, to make the Con-  
 " quest of your Heart. I ask only your  
 " Heart in exchange for mine. My Daugh-  
 " ter, *Give me thy Heart*, Prov. xxiii. 26."  
 To which you may reply, O sacred Spouse,  
 who would not love thee! Consume me  
 with thy Flame. Make me wholly thine.  
 Never suffer me to do any Thing unworthy  
 of the Honour which thou dost me. After  
 this, repose yourself in the Arms of your  
 divine Spouse.

Be not, my Daughter, like those adul-  
 terous Spouses, who withdraw their Hearts  
 from God, to prostitute them to the Creatures.

*Thou*

*Thou shalt destroy* (saith the Psalmist, *Psal.* lxxiii. 27, 28.) *all them that go a Whoring from thee ; but it is good for me to draw near to God, and to put all my Trust in him.*

You must endeavour to continue in a Spirit of Prayer all the Day long, by fervent Ejaculations suitable to the Subject of your Morning's Meditation ; sometimes invoking God as your *Master, King, Father,* &c. agreeable to the Directions here given.

The other Way I recommended to you of *maintaining a Sense of the Divine Presence*, was the doing the Will of God in your daily Business. Now the Will of God is continually revealed to you in the daily Dispensations of Providence ; and our Business is faithfully to follow it from *Moment to Moment*, cheerfully accepting all that befalls us (sweet or bitter, pleasing or vexatious) whether from the Hand of God by Afflictions, or from Men by ill Usage, or from ourselves by Imprudence and Mistakes ; and in doing thus, we cannot be deceived : for it is most certain that whatever happens to us, (excepting only Sin) is the Will of God.

S E C T.



S E C T. III.

*How to pass the Day Religiously.*

**A**RISE, and go to Bed, at a certain Hour ; and where there is no fixed Rule, Disorders will soon ensue. You should not lie longer than Seven in the Morning at farthest, nor sit up later than Ten at Night.

As soon as you awake, present your first Thoughts to the Lord, and offer him the first Fruits of the Day.

As soon as you arise, fail not to fall on your Knees before God ; it is an Homage due to his supream Majesty.

As soon as you are dressed, spend half an Hour in Devotion. There unite yourself to the Sacrifice which Christ made of himself to him, that he may do *with you*, and *in you*, whatever he pleases. Let your principal Exercise be an absolute Submission to the whole Will of God ; be subject, be entirely subject to it. To serve him is to reign.

Be not long a dressing. Remember Time is a precious Talent, that must be

accounted for. Be not affected or expensive in your Cloaths, and on the other Hand be not negligent. Be dressed clean, so as to give no Offence. Let your Cloaths be decent. Let your Virtue, Candour, and Discretion, make you distinguished, and not what you wear. They must be very destitute of solid Merit, who seek Distinction by Dress and Equipage.

Never pass the Morning without reading some spiritual Book, such as *Thomas a Kempis*, *Francis de Sales*, or the like. Read little, but with Relish and Application. Read slowly, that you may profit by it: And when you come from Devotion, be careful not to dissipate your Thoughts, but preserve what you have received thereby, as a precious Liquor, which you Fear should be evaporated. The Fire kindles in Prayer, but it soon goes out, if it be not kept up the rest of the Day. The Fuel you must feed it with is frequent Recollection, and tranquil Acts of Love, Thanksgiving, and Oblation of yourself to God; and (as it were) sinking inwards to find him there, who is the Center of your Soul.

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But above all other Books, my Advice is, that you read the holy *Scripture*, which will shew you particularly what Christianity engages you to do. Read it often : make it your principal Study : let it be your daily Bread. You will learn there from Christ himself what you must do, not to offend him. You will see there, what he has done, and suffered for you. Your Religion is there in its Purity. You will be there encouraged by the Examples of the Patriarchs and Saints of the old Law, as well as of those, who were the first Pillars of Christianity ; and therefore (my dear Child) I advise you not to pass one Day, without reading a certain Portion of it. Sometimes you may read where the Book opens, and let your general Method be, to read it in Order, beginning where you left off last, that you may better understand its Beauties, and relish its Sweetness. Read with Humility, not to appear knowing, but to edify and nourish your Soul ; that you may be fully instructed in your Duty, and what the Covenant which God has made with you, obliges you to.

You

You may pass your Afternoon at Work, and in Visiting your Friends. You may take some Time for Recreation, but never spend an Afternoon without reserving some Part of it for Recollection and Prayer.

At Night, examine yourself, and make an Act of Contrition : Then continue with Tranquillity in the Presence of God till you drop asleep. This will make you rest well. Rise again in the same Dispositions, and persevere in this inward *Peace of God, which passeth all Understanding.*

It must be a general Rule with you, to endeavour to suppress all vain and useless Thoughts, and stop the working of your Head, to preserve that of your Heart. When many Reflections crowd upon your Mind, give them no Entertainment, but let them drop, that you may open your Heart to God. Continue the Day as you began it, and so from Time to Time you may repose in God.



S E C T.

## S E C T. IV.

*Concerning Mortification.*

EVERY Day deny yourself some Satisfaction, like *St Paul*, who was always bearing about in the Body the dying of the Lord Jesus, *2 Cor. iv. 10.* It is of great Consequence, (as the same Apostle speaks, *Rom. vi. 19.*) that we should make *the Members*, which have served Iniquity, to *become the Servants of Righteousness.*

As for the *Eyes*, which are a Source of numberless Sins, there are two Ways of mortifying them : as first, by Tears, which indeed are not of universal Obligation ; and those which arise only from a Concern for ourselves, and not from the vehement Ardours of our Charity, are not such as God demands. He himself must kindle the Fire in the Heart, before that sacred Moisture will exhale by the Eyes. But as such Tears are not necessary to Repentance, (tho' they are a Proof of it) and as they are not in our Power, they may not be enjoined as obligatory. The other  
way



way of mortifying the Sight is by Recollection in Prayer, shutting our Eyes against all outward Objects, that we may gather the Force of the Mind inward applied to God. We should moreover mortify the Eyes, in refusing them all Objects of mere Curiosity: This kind of Mortification is very profitable, and can by no Means prejudice the Health.

The *Tongue* must be mortified, in refraining from saying any Thing that may feed Vanity, or vent Enmity: we must keep a continual Guard upon our Lips, that we may not say what tends to our own Commendation, or our Neighbour's Disparagement. The *Taste* too must be mortified, by refusing it what it most delights in, and using it to what it least cares for: This may be done so privately, that no Body may perceive it; and with such Discretion, that our Health be not impaired. The *Hearing* must be mortified, by rejecting all Flattery, and every Kind of Conversation that tends to corrupt the Heart: and it must be brought to delight itself in attending to the Word of God, not only that which strikes our

bodily

bodily Sense, but also to the secret Whispers of his Spirit.

You must subdue and mortify your Body, by renouncing all Affectations of Delicacy and luxurious Ease, and sometimes by breaking your Rest a little, to spend the Time in Devotion. But the true and principal Manner of chastizing the Body, which you may, and ought to do in all Times and Places, is to bear, for the Love of God, all the Inconveniencies of Life which happen in the Order of his Providence; the Cold, the Heat, a bad Bed, a restless Night, ill Health, the Neglect of Persons we live with, the Unhandiness of Servants, the ill Will of Men, their Scorn, and their Calumnies; in fine, our own Faults, and the Pain we find in conquering our vicious Inclinations.

The most beneficial and difficult Humiliation is that which arises from our own Follies, Wretchedness, and Sins: But we must bear it patiently, and proceed herein, as if, for the Love of God, we had the Care of some Person infected with the Leprosy, whose Sores we were to wash every Day, without being tired, or offended at his putrid Ulcers.

It

It is necessary then, my dear Child, that your Prayer be ever accompanied with a true and solid Mortification. Let us not deceive ourselves, Prayer and Mortification are two Sisters, so essentially link'd together, that whenever one diminishes, the other must decay with it. Oftentimes Dryness, or want of Devotion in Prayer, is occasioned merely by want of Mortification. God is jealous, and withdraws himself, for the Punishment of our neglecting that Self-Denial which he has commanded. Make then daily, as I have directed you, this double Sacrifice to God, in refusing what pleases you most, and in doing what is most repugnant to your natural Inclination. Do not flatter yourself in this Point: Be sincere with God, and perform what you do for his Sake with the greatest Privacy, as having no other View but to please him; for he regards the Intention as much or more than the Action.

Give yourself to God with an Heart upright, sincere, and disengaged: Mortify and deny yourself continually. When you find your Inclinations tending towards the Creatures, and your Mind and Heart taken

up

up with them, you must bear with yourself, returning to God with an humble Confidence, dropping the worldly Thoughts, and enduring the Pain they give you, without directly combating it, which would but disquiet you: But do you continue in Tranquillity before God. All you must do is, to avoid, as much as possible, the Occasions of Sin, and die to all the little Satisfactions and Desires of Talkativeness and Curiosity.

Don't make yourself uneasy for the Troubles, Temptations, and continual Vicissitudes, to which human Nature is subject, but bear them meekly, and accustom yourself to Peace, and Tranquillity of Spirit.

You ought not to be scrupulous about Things, which your Condition requires of you, but to do every Thing in the Order of God, and for God's Sake; and to regard every Thing that happens, as the Appointment of God, as the Manifestation of his Will, which to fulfil in the present Moment should be as the Food of your Soul. Mind not what others think to be better or more holy: the Order of God,

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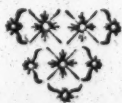
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manifested in the Course of his Providence, must be the only Rule of your Conduct.

Mortify the Itch of talking about Religion; 'tis an Infirmary, and prejudicial when we give Way to it. If you take my Advice, you will be long silent upon that Subject and not talk *of* God, but *to him*: He would have his inward Operations kept secret, and nothing appear of them, but in a meek, humble, resigned, cordial, and chearful Demeanour.

Keep always an inward Solitude, without which the outward is unprofitable. By an inward Solitude, I mean that you should shut out the Thoughts of the World and yourself, that your Mind may be vacant to God: but you should not disturb yourself for Things that come into your Mind against your Will.

All that we desire with Passion and Eagerness, is not of God: God dwells in Peace.





S E C T. V.

*Some Rules for Conversation.*

**A**S Conversation is all that makes the Society of Life, it is very necessary to learn how to behave in it.

Your Conversation should be mild, with good Breeding, and without Debate. Be never obstinate in an Argument, but give way freely: Make no Person uneasy, and bear with the Faults of others.

Never talk of your Neighbour, but to his Advantage; and, as much as you can, take the Part of the absent, who is evil spoken of. Judge no Body, and be backward to believe ill Reports. Speak simply the Truth, without Exaggeration.

Let you Conversation be free and chearful, but without Vanity.

Avoid Flatterers, and those who commend what is faulty in you. Think them your true Friends, who tell you of your Faults; and be assured, that they who commend them, mean only to make a Jest of you.

Never make a Friendship with Persons that take too great Freedoms : don't so much as keep them Company. Choose for your Friends, Persons of Piety and good Sense : Give them full Liberty to tell you of your Faults, and be pleased with them for so doing, without which (take what Pains you please besides) you will never be so good as you should be.

Never break with your Friends, unless they prove vicious ; in which Case, you should not have begun a Friendship. Be particularly distrustful of Women that have a bad Character ; they often are more dangerous than Men.

Never suffer Men to take any Freedom with you, but carry yourself with Gravity towards them. Do not receive frequent Visits from any Man. Never give room to suspect that you give any Preference in your Heart, which good Breeding obliges you to conceal : but being civil to all Men, be familiar with none. Never be alone with a Man, nor give any an Opportunity of saying what you ought not to hear. Guard well the Avenues of your Heart : If once the  
Bank

Bank be broke down, you cannot hinder an Inundation.

Give Alms according to your Substance. Sometimes visit the Sick. Be particularly careful of the Poor that are upon your own Estate, for those you are bound to provide for. Comfort the Afflicted, and afflict no Body. Let all your Works be done with Discretion and Charity.

Be meek, chearful, and peaceable: Have no odd Humours. Never blame without Reason, that when you have Reason you may be more minded. Never reprove with Passion. Treat your Servants with great Firmness, and with Charity, but with little Familiarity. When they are sick, don't put them out of your House, if you can help it; but if their Disease be such as makes a Removal necessary, sweeten it by kind Treatment, and plentiful Provision for them elsewhere. Remember that your own Servants have the first Title to your Charity.

Hurt no Body, not even in jest: and speak not what you think may make any Body uneasy. Be ready to pardon Injuries, and give no one Occasion to practise  
that

that Virtue upon your Account. Never make a Jest of any Body, it is a notable Sin.

In fine, my Daughter, often implore the Assistance of God ; and if you follow these Directions, you will be happy in this World, and in the next.

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